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President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m.

International Day of Peace

The President: Before giving the floor to the first speaker in the general debate for this morning, I wish to remind members that today, 21 September, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/282 of 7 September 2001, the Assembly is observing the International Day of Peace. A very fine ceremony took place at the Peace Bell this morning, which reminded us of the realities in the world, which we should all bring into this Hall. Let us keep the International Day of Peace in our minds, both today and in the days, months and years to come.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Abdullah Gül, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey.

Mr. Gül (Turkey): At the outset, I would like to convey the condolences of my people to the friendly people of the United States on the tragic loss of life and large-scale destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina. This is also a stark reminder of the many other natural and man-made disasters, such as famine in Africa, tsunamis, earthquakes, ecological catastrophes and wide-scale violence and terrorism. They all require sustained international attention and cooperation. Having suffered from similar disasters, Turkey deeply feels for others and stands in solidarity with them.

Upholding the principles of justice, dignity, equality and social progress for the men and women of our world should be the basis of the international order. We must spread justice together with freedom. We cannot rest until we provide prosperity and dignity for every human being. Those principles should guide us in our future efforts.

We have left a very busy period behind, culminating with an important summit. The Summit Outcome document (resolution 60/1) has encouraged us all to focus on the global problems we face and on the way to achieve positive change. Now is the time to act. We must start implementing what we have agreed upon on issues ranging from peacebuilding to human rights. While doing this, we must not lose sight of our main target: we must reach the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, by the year 2015.

With these things in mind, we welcome the Secretary-General's proposal to start with an accountability pact (see A/60/PV.9). We also welcome your idea, Mr. President, to submit an outline of work for the year ahead related to follow-up of the summit.

A large number of international problems that are high on the United Nations agenda are occurring in our part of the world. These are real issues that closely affect the daily lives of our people. As a country with a

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rich heritage and great international experience, we are working to build a culture of compromise and reconciliation.

Our historical and cultural links to nations in neighbouring regions from Eurasia to the Islamic world and our role as a member of European, trans-Atlantic and Mediterranean institutions will have a positive effect on Turkey's contribution to international relations in the twenty-first century.

It is against that background, and with a sense of confidence, that I take the opportunity to submit to the Assembly's attention Turkey's candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the term 2009-2010.

Ongoing reform efforts hold great promise for the improvement of the political, social and economic standards of the Middle East region. We will continue to encourage and assist those local efforts.

Concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip is an encouraging development. We would like to witness the same positive trend in the West Bank. Israeli settlement activities in occupied territories must come to an end. The sanctity of the holy sites in Jerusalem must be respected. The road map should be revived and fully implemented.

Furthermore, we must not let terror and violence derail the process this time. The reform of the Palestinian National Authority must move forward, particularly in the security domain. Efforts to improve the living conditions of the Palestinians have to be intensified. We support the work of Mr. James Wolfensohn, Quartet Special Envoy for Disengagement, and are cooperating with him. We believe these efforts will help restore a sense of hope among the Palestinians and ensure security for the Israelis.

In order to integrate the Palestinians with the world, seaports and airports must be built and activated. Border crossings and trade corridors must function smoothly. Freedom of movement must be achieved. Such measures will go a long way towards revitalizing the Palestinian economy. That will encourage the Palestinians to become real partners in peace with the Israelis. Turkey is already actively working with the parties for the realization of this vision. We are determined to continue to contribute in any way we can.

Iraq's destiny and the way the events are unfolding in that country are of crucial importance for peace and stability in the Middle East and beyond. Building a democratic and prosperous Iraq at peace with itself and its neighbours will be possible only if the Iraqi people act as one, in full solidarity and with a clear vision. Ethnic and religious differences in Iraq should not be divisive. Rather they should be a source of cultural plurality. Otherwise, the new Iraq will be a source of instability and conflict, instead of hope and inspiration for the entire region.

Turkey, in cooperation with the United Nations, has been in the forefront of efforts for political and economic rehabilitation in Iraq. The Neighbours of Iraq forum, again pioneered by Turkey, has been an efficient platform to support the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq.

The security situation is a source of concern for all. Iraq has, unfortunately, become a training ground for terrorists. As a neighbouring country, Turkey suffers as a result of this. We are concerned that terrorism emanating from Iraq might have a ripple effect on other countries, including Turkey. It is our joint duty to prevent such an outcome.

The problems of Nagorny Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia continue to impede peace and cooperation in the South Caucusus. These problems defy all United Nations principles. They demand our urgent attention. In particular, a peaceful settlement must be found to the Nagorny Karabakh issue consistent with the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Steps towards ending the occupation of Azeri territory will create a better climate in the region, including in Turkish-Armenian relations. We are giving full support to the efforts of the Minsk Group. We are closely following the high-level contacts between Turkey's two neighbours and are encouraging the parties to make progress.

In Afghanistan, many challenges still lie ahead. The continued support of the international community is still needed. Among other matters, education, health, gender equality and economic development need increased attention. Alternative crops must be encouraged in order to replace widespread poppy cultivation. As a country that has twice led the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan,

for a total of 14 months during the past three years, Turkey wishes to reiterate its continued commitment. We welcome the holding of elections as an encouraging development for democracy in Afghanistan.

We are determined to continue our support for the strengthening of peace, stability and prosperity in South-East Europe. The Balkan region has made considerable progress towards the establishment of a peaceful environment leading to economic development. The political and economic consolidation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and final-status talks in Kosovo need to be monitored carefully. Turkey will continue to be a reliable partner in this process.

Regarding the Eastern Mediterranean, our vision is to create a basin of cooperation, stability and prosperity among Turkey, Greece and the two peoples of Cyprus. However, it is regrettable that, at a time when we are debating the best way to reform the United Nations and enhance its role, we are at the same time witnessing an attempt to move the Cyprus problem away from this Organization. We regard these efforts to undermine the role of the United Nations as a most disturbing paradox. The Annan plan represented a unique basis for the solution of this problem. Although it did not fully meet their expectations, for the sake of compromise the Turkish Cypriots approved the plan by an overwhelming majority.

On the other hand, under the effective guidance of the Greek Cypriot leadership, the rejection of the Annan plan in a referendum held last year was a blow to the international community. Thus, a chance to put an end to the division of the island once and for all was missed.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2004/437) issued after the referendum gave an overview of the long negotiating process and recommended the lifting of all restrictions upon the Turkish Cypriots. Unfortunately, against established practice, the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on Cyprus is being disregarded. As a result, the unfair restrictions imposed upon the Turkish Cypriots could not be lifted. One might find it difficult to believe that the Turkish Cypriots still continue to live under restrictions, cut off from the outside world.

During the ensuing period, the Secretary-General's soundings and his efforts to reactivate the talks based on his plan have yielded no tangible results because of the continued intransigence of the Greek Cypriot administration. As if that were not enough, the Greek Cypriot administration is now trying to sideline the United Nations and carry this issue to other forums. I urge all international actors to discourage these misguided efforts. Turkey continues to be ready to contribute to United Nations endeavours to find a just, equitable and lasting solution to the Cyprus problem on the basis of the Annan plan.

On this occasion, I would like to reiterate the proposal that I made on 30 May 2005 for the lifting of all restrictions related to the island (see A/59/820). In that proposal, I basically suggested that it was necessary to enable the free movement of people, goods and services and to lift all restrictions applied to seaports and airports between the two sides in Cyprus as well as to Turkey and Greece. It is evident that this proposal conforms to the legitimate expectations of the international community.

We attach great importance to furthering our relations and cooperation with the African continent. According to an action plan, Turkey is vigorously developing its relations with Africa as a whole. We recently opened an office in Addis Ababa to serve as a coordination centre for Turkish humanitarian and developmental assistance to the continent. The Turkish Government has also declared 2005 as the Year of Africa in Turkey. We will continue our contributions to international institutions, working to alleviate the suffering and eliminate disease and hunger in Africa.

The chain of attacks in various parts of the world proves that no country is immune to terrorism. We condemn these atrocities in the strongest terms. No distinction should be made among terrorist organizations. There is no room for double standards in this fight. We must reject terrorism as a method, regardless of where, why and how it is employed. Combating terrorism should be a global and collective effort, and the United Nations should continue to play a prominent role. We welcome Security Council resolutions that call for strengthened measures against incitement of terrorist acts and in favour of the prevention of armed conflict, particularly in Africa. We must also resist any temptation to associate any specific culture, religion or faith with terrorism.

We should keep in mind that the right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy requires full and transparent cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency. The establishment of zones free of

weapons of mass destruction, particularly in the Middle East, will be an important contribution to international peace and security.

Strengthening multilateralism and the central role of the United Nations in the international system is a fundamental aspect of our foreign policy. It is the strongest hope and guarantee for a safer and better world.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Alexander Downer, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia.

Mr. Downer (Australia): Australia is a founding Member of the United Nations, and we have long supported this Organization's important role in world affairs. The United Nations has many achievements to celebrate in its sixtieth year. Equally, the sixtieth anniversary places the shortcomings and indeed the failings of the United Nations under a microscope for all to see.

In approaching this occasion, the United Nations and its Members have been presented with a challenge: to find practical and workable ways to bring greater security and prosperity to the people of the world through a reformed United Nations system. This has not been easy. The reform agenda is simultaneously vast and urgent, with agreement on approaches difficult — at times impossible — to achieve, as the recent summit process made clear.

Australia welcomes the summit's progress in some important areas, particularly the agreement to establish a Peacebuilding Commission to assist fragile States, a field of endeavour where Australia has long been active in its own region, as I have outlined in previous addresses to the General Assembly. We also welcome the fact that States have agreed for the first time that the international community, through the United Nations, has the responsibility to act to protect populations from gross and systematic violations of human rights.

We also welcome the call for early conclusion of a comprehensive terrorism convention and early entry into force of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

We are pleased that, on development, the Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) recognizes what already underpins Australia's approach to development assistance: that good governance, sound economic policies, anti-corruption measures and trade liberalization are critical elements in fighting poverty and promoting economies and stable communities. Australia has a proud record of assistance in these areas, further underscored by our announcement last week of an increase in Australia's overseas aid allocation to about 4 billion Australian dollars by 2010 — a doubling of aid from 2004 levels — as well as generous contributions of 10 million Australian dollars to the Democracy Fund and 3 million to the Peacebuilding Fund over three years.

As a nation that strongly supports an ambitious outcome of the Doha round of multilateral trade negotiations and recognizes the crucial importance of this to developing countries, Australia also welcomes the pledge and challenge put forward by President Bush a week ago (see A/60/PV.2): that the United States is ready to eliminate all tariffs, subsidies and other barriers if other nations do the same.

But alongside these welcome outcomes, many questions and, in some cases, vast disappointments remain. On arms control and non-proliferation, we have absolutely nothing to show — an extraordinarily poor outcome given a contemporary global security environment in which proliferation threats are so clearly evident.

The outdated ideology that too many delegations brought to negotiations was a damningly deep reflection on the intergovernmental process at the United Nations. We did not grasp the opportunity provided by the largest-ever gathering of world leaders to produce a political declaration defining acts of terrorism.

How can some nations continue to assert that the deliberate maiming and targeting of civilians is sometimes justified?

How is it — after atrocities in Sharm el-Sheikh, Istanbul, Jakarta, Riyadh and on a daily basis in Iraq — that some continue to employ double standards, deceiving themselves into believing that such terrorists could ever be considered to be "freedom fighters"?

This is not an argument about the merits of a particular cause. It is about the moral imperative to outlaw behaviour that offends civilization.

We were disappointed that the summit missed the opportunity to make progress on Security Council reform to ensure that the Council's membership and

functioning match the priorities and the realities of this century.

While the summit resolved to create a Human Rights Council, the outcome document is disappointingly short on detail. A new Human Rights Council must overcome the credibility deficit that plagues current human rights machinery and that sees some of the most egregious human rights abusers elevated to positions of leadership.

Australia will participate constructively in negotiations on the shape of this new Council. We will also more than double — to $650,000 — our contribution to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Finally, the management reforms agreed at the summit are a step in the right direction, but they are just that — one step.

The Secretary-General needs more authority and flexibility to manage the United Nations. And — as recent inquiries have highlighted in sobering detail — the United Nations accountability, audit and oversight systems must be massively strengthened. It will not be easy, but we must address anew our failures.

The summit heralded an historic shift in our thinking on humanitarian intervention, showing a willingness to embrace a new mindset, one which addresses our responsibility to watch out for each other in times of need — our collective "responsibility to protect". Too often the world has stood by watching humanitarian disasters unfold before international machinery has creaked into action.

In Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda and Kosovo, action taken was too little, too late. Today, the situation in Darfur epitomizes those shortcomings.

As the Summit Outcome makes clear, all States have a responsibility to protect their own population from egregious crimes such as genocide and crimes against humanity. Where a population is suffering serious harm, and the relevant State is unwilling or unable to stop this, the principle of non-intervention should yield to the collective responsibility to protect.

The Security Council must now rely on this new consensus to respond more effectively to humanitarian crises.

We have a responsibility to react faster to situations of compelling human need, and we must do more to help countries rebuild, recover and reconcile after conflicts or disasters.

In the last year we have seen the people of Afghanistan and Iraq exercise restored democratic rights. The international community must continue support for their transformations, help them to leave behind the experience of brutal dictators and narrow regimes, and ensure that progress and democracy take root.

Ceding any ground in Iraq or Afghanistan to the tyranny of terrorism and the violent suffering it brings would be a backward step in our global campaign, a campaign we continue to fight but have not yet won, as the July terrorist attacks in London and the ongoing terrorist menace in South-East Asia and elsewhere make clear. There remains an urgent need for nations to come together to confront terrorists in the battle of ideas, contest extremist ideologies, and build greater and more productive dialogue between faiths and civilizations.

Australia is doing its utmost in our region to tackle terrorism and the ideology that feeds it. United Nations machinery must also play a part. Many Member States still need assistance to implement United Nations counter-terrorism standards and build their counter-terrorism capabilities — the kind of outcomes Australia is already pursuing in cooperation with its regional partners. Leaders made some progress in this direction last week but did not adopt the Secretary-General's counter-terrorism strategy.

Australia welcomed the General Assembly's adoption of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism in April this year. Our Prime Minister, John Howard, signed that Convention for Australia at the summit. It is now imperative that we redouble our efforts to conclude a comprehensive convention against terrorism during this session of the General Assembly. Closing the gaps in the counter-terrorism legal framework is an essential complement to our concerted efforts to prevent future attacks and to prosecute those who commit terrorist acts. Effective international efforts to criminalize such acts are a vital step forward.

The world today is confronted by a menace not envisaged at the time the Geneva Conventions were drafted — terrorist organizations and their foot soldiers, like those captured in Afghanistan, who bear arms on a battlefield but pay no heed to the laws of

war, fight for no regular army, wear no uniform and bear no recognizable insignia. Just as international law evolved to deal with a scourge of another age — piracy — so today a comprehensive convention against terrorism is needed to help deal with these perpetrators of terrorist acts.

The summit was a lost opportunity on disarmament and non-proliferation. Multilateral non-proliferation regimes are being tested now by a small minority of Governments that flout the norms and standards observed by the rest of the international community and which in doing so imperil the security of us all.

A dangerous new dimension to this global challenge is the known ambition of terrorists to acquire weapons of mass destruction. It is therefore imperative that we take practical action against proliferation as it occurs, through innovative measures such as the Proliferation Security Initiative that complement and reinforce multilateral regimes.

Earlier this year I saw firsthand the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons be thwarted by a few countries determined to prevent consensus.

Australia — together with the overwhelming majority of States — remains unwavering in its support for the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and we will continue to take a leading role in universalizing the Additional Protocol on strengthening nuclear safeguards, making it a precondition for the supply of uranium to non-nuclear-weapon States.

It is not acceptable, in the current global climate, that we have not started negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, a treaty which would reduce the risk of leakage of fissile material to proliferators or terrorists and would buttress nuclear disarmament gains made to date.

I am pleased to be chairing the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty Article XIV Conference this afternoon, looking for ways to accelerate that Treaty's entry into force.

A firmer and more active Security Council role on the issue of weapons of mass destruction is also sorely needed.

Australia is a committed and long-term supporter of the United Nations and of the vital role that it can play in promoting international peace and security. We have a proud record of contributing to United Nations activities, funding and debates, extending back to its formation in 1945.

But we are not an uncritical supporter. The need to reform the United Nations has been a consistent theme since I first addressed the General Assembly at its fifty-first session in 1996. Such a need is all the more compelling today.

The reality is that there continue to be States failing or in precipitous decline for no reasons other than poor leadership and poor governance — with disastrous results for human lives. What does it say when the international community proves to be unwilling to act when misrule has caused life expectancy to plunge in what was one of Africa's most promising countries — from around 63 years in the early 1990s, to just under 34 years in 2004? Would today's United Nations be able to prevent another Rwanda?

We and the publics of the world expect much of the United Nations, and rightly so. The stakes are too high in this complex and challenging security environment to accept anything less. We all have a part to play. There was some welcome progress at the summit, but where we have fallen short we must acknowledge it and be ambitious in pursuing more meaningful reform. Large challenges loom before us. We should approach them with a degree of realism. Australia does not believe that the United Nations is the answer to all the problems of the world. But the Organization does have a role to play. When we call on the United Nations, it must be able to fulfil that role effectively and expeditiously. The publics of the world expect nothing less.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At this session we celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. We also begin, actively and seriously, our effort to revitalize this strong Organization, which humankind decided to establish after it experienced two devastating wars during the first half of the twentieth century. There is no doubt that this session has been convened at a time when international relations are undergoing major changes and when hope is being tempered by threats

and challenges to the stability of the international community and the peace and security of all our peoples.

Recent international developments have proved the increasing need to strengthen the capabilities of the multilateral framework in addressing problems facing our nations and peoples and in achieving the required balance on four issues that we consider to be at the core of our contemporary interests: development, international peace and security, human rights and the institutional reform of the Organization.

Addressing the issue of development at the international level requires strong political will to implement the commitments we have undertaken, which we reaffirmed together in the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting (resolution 60/1), primarily the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals adopted at the Millennium Summit, the revitalization of the international partnership for development and the mobilization of the financial resources it requires, and the fulfilment of the commitment made by many developed countries to reach the target of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in official development assistance by 2015. I would like to take this opportunity to express Egypt's appreciation to the countries that have reaffirmed their commitment to fulfil their obligations in that regard.

In attaining our common goals, it is therefore imperative to use the consensus we reached at the High-level Plenary Meeting as a platform to build greater consensus towards achieving the development priorities of developing countries, especially during the upcoming Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, to be held in Hong Kong, and at other international forums dealing with issues of importance to the developing world, especially those of trade, debt relief, investment and industrial modernization, as well as other issues that can bring about the justice and openness required in our international trading system and provide developing countries with the opportunities they need to raise the living standards of their peoples.

In fulfilling our long-standing commitments to achieve sustained economic growth and sustainable development in Africa, Egypt wishes to call upon our partners in developed countries to play a leading role in support of the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). That African-owned initiative constitutes an ambitious partnership for sustainable development that can ensure Africa's integration into the world economy, lead to the achievement of good national and international governance and promote the contribution of civil society and the private sector in the achievement of our development goals.

Along with achieving economic security for all, it is essential that we strive to achieve international peace and security by practically and realistically addressing the challenges and threats facing the international community. Since terrorism is the most dangerous menace of our times, Egypt actively contributed to reaching consensus on the Summit Outcome document's condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, as it constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security.

Contrary to what some might have imagined, the recent terrorist attacks that have struck many countries — including Egypt — have now made it clear that terrorism is a danger that does not distinguish among peoples, cultures or religions; rather it is a non-discriminating threat to human civilization. Those attacks have also reminded us that counter-terrorism efforts should not be limited to enhancing measures to combat terrorism or to finding ways to improve their implementation. Rather, they should include effectively addressing the underlying causes of the phenomenon. Accordingly, Egypt has put forth an initiative to convene a high-level meeting of the General Assembly to draft and adopt a comprehensive plan of action that includes the necessary legal and practical measures to deal effectively with terrorism — without affecting the ability of peoples under occupation to gain their independence in accordance with established international law and norms — until it is completely eradicated.

In conformity with that position, Egypt pledges to exert extensive efforts with a view to concluding a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. Such a convention, along with the 12 existing international counter-terrorism conventions, to which the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism was added this year, could constitute the most comprehensive legal framework possible to tackle this phenomenon.

The issues of disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction relate to another major threat requiring concerted international action in the near future, specially as the High-level Plenary Meeting could not reach agreement on how to address those issues in a manner consistent with their crucial importance and urgency to the safety and security of the human race. Our common endeavour should be based on restoring the balance between nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy: the three pillars of progress in achieving our common objectives. The point of departure for our undertaking can only be the consensus reached at the 1995 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which constitutes an integral part of the package that made possible the indefinite extension of the NPT, along with the resolution on the Middle East adopted at that Conference. Concerted international efforts, in particular by nuclear-weapon States, to achieve the universality of the NPT are essential; otherwise, we risk having the Treaty lose its credibility and relevance.

To that end, we require strong political will to relaunch the United Nations disarmament machinery, reinforce the mutual and balanced implementation of commitments and obligations set forth in existing treaties, achieve the universality of those treaties prior to making any attempts to impose further obligations on States parties and fully respect the commitments entered into under those instruments. We also need determination to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, in order to support efforts to reach a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

The establishment of the Human Rights Council must prove to be a landmark in the promotion of, and respect for, principles and freedoms. Its mandate, composition and methods of work must be formulated in a democratic manner and be based on the principle of equitable geographic distribution while also taking into consideration each region's specific cultural and civilizational characteristics. The Human Rights Council must also assist and encourage countries to improve human rights and respect for the rule of law on their territories. To that end, we must strengthen the human rights machinery and the rule of law in a manner that will enable us to redress existing shortcomings — in particular, politicization, selectivity and double standards — and as to promote coexistence and dialogue among civilizations in contrast to the division and differences that characterize our current handling of these issues. In that connection, I agree with the previous speaker, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia.

The Egyptian National Council on Human Rights has been established in order to promote that effort. It enjoys the institutional independence it needs to carry out its tasks with due impartiality and objectivity. It also has the capacity to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to participate in the formulation, prioritization and implementation of national policies.

We must also launch a coordinated multilateral effort to promote human rights and to address rights violations by enhancing the capacity of States to protect their populations against genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Here, we must not capitalize on exceptional situations as a pretext to interfere in the internal affairs of States. In accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant provisions of international law, we must draw a line between the inability of a State to protect its population against such crimes and its unwillingness to do so.

Our common efforts to ensure larger freedom for our peoples are closely linked to our resolve and ability to settle current political issues, most notably in our region, the Palestinian question. While we welcome the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and a few settlements in the northern part of the West Bank, we also call upon the Israeli Government to continue withdrawing its troops from all Palestinian territories and to implement all of its commitments in that respect, in accordance with the road map, which should lead us to our common goal: the establishment of an independent Palestinian State coexisting with Israel in mutual peace and security. However, until we reach that goal, Israel must cease settlement activities in the West Bank, stop building its separation wall, improve the humanitarian situation of the Palestinians in the occupied territories and launch final-status negotiations towards a comprehensive settlement. Israel must also withdraw from the remaining Arab territories in Syria and Lebanon occupied in 1967.

Furthermore, we cannot address respect for human rights unless we address the human rights situation in Iraq, particularly every Iraqi citizen's right

to life. In that context, and despite the establishment of the Interim Government and the drafting of a new constitution, national reconciliation among the entire brotherly Iraqi people is still needed. We urgently need an increased understanding that violence and the killing of innocent people will not lead to the desired security and stability for Iraq.

Egypt will continue its support for the important steps taken by the Sudan towards peace and stability, in the context of maintaining that country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Egypt will continue to support the implementation of the Nairobi Comprehensive Peace Agreement on southern Sudan and the Cairo agreement complementing it. We will also participate actively in peace negotiations on Darfur under the auspices of the African Union and continue Egypt's support by contributing troops to the United Nations Mission in the Sudan, as well as observers to the African Union Mission in Darfur.

It is in that context that Egypt continues to place the security and stability of Africa at the centre of its regional and international policies. Egypt will therefore continue to increase its efforts to resolve contemporary African political problems. It has contributed, and will continue to contribute, to all peacekeeping operations in Africa, as well as to support all of Africa's ongoing efforts to implement an integrated approach to development that covers all political, economic and social dimensions. Egypt's commitment to Africa is based on an unwavering conviction of our common destiny and on the need for continued cooperation. Here, the African Union has a central role to play; it must have the full support of the United Nations.

Because of the particular importance that Africa attaches to the link between security and development in addressing situations in countries emerging from conflict, Egypt has supported the establishment of the proposed Peacebuilding Commission. However, the activities of the Commission must reflect a balance among the various mandates of the principal organs of the United Nations and the various steps taken in tackling each issue. We also call for a leading in the work of the Commission role for both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, along with the Security Council. The Commission must become neither a body to impose trusteeship on States nor an instrument to bypass the will and the national priorities of States. The Peacebuilding Commission must always remain an effective advisory body focusing on mobilizing assistance to post-conflict countries on its agenda, in order to enable them to attain their national aspirations to sustainable peace and stability.

The United Nations will not be able to carry out all those increasing and challenging tasks unless we embark upon effective institutional reform that takes into consideration the balance between the Organization's principal organs, that ensures the implementation of the Organization's tasks and that enhances the credibility of the United Nations and eliminates the causes of the criticism it has been facing.

There is no doubt that among the most important pillars of institutional reform is the revitalization of the General Assembly and the strengthening of its role as the chief deliberative, policymaking, implementing and monitoring body of the United Nations. The Assembly should cooperate with the Secretary-General within a transparent framework and should provide him with the authority he needs to carry out his tasks effectively while ensuring that he remains committed to the tasks mandated by the principal organs of the Organization.

We look forward to the proposals that the Secretary-General is expected to present, including those on improving auditing and oversight, which should duly take into account the intergovernmental nature of the existing budgetary and management committees. We also look forward to undertaking, through the General Assembly and other relevant bodies, a one-time review of mandates older than five years, while emphasizing the need to avoid a mere regulatory approach to that issue and the imperative of taking its political implications into consideration. We must never neglect the international political balance, or affect ongoing efforts to resolve contemporary problems.

In that context, the reform and expansion of the Security Council is becoming increasingly important, particularly in the light of the Council's role in the maintenance of international peace and security. That reform must ensure that the Security Council is more representative of the general membership of the Organization and more transparent in addressing the issues on its agenda. In that regard, I wish to stress the commitment of Egypt to the African Common Position on this issue, as set out in the Ezulwini consensus and the Sirte declaration, which aims at fulfilling the

legitimate aspirations of our continent for permanent and balanced representation in an expanded Security Council and at remedying the existing imbalance in the representation of Africa in particular and of developing countries in general.

The outcome document that we adopted at the High-level Plenary Meeting marking the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations (resolution 60/1) is solid proof of the vitality of the Organization and of a genuine desire that its essential role continue. We look forward to working together to move ahead and to improve the capacity of the United Nations to fulfil our common objectives on the basis of firm political will to implement the commitments agreed upon in that document. We must expand the agreement's scope to encompass all aspects of international action. That is the only path available to us in order to attain our peoples' aspirations to peace, security and stability.

The President: I now call on His Excellency The Honourable Samuel R. Insanally, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Guyana and the former President of the General Assembly.

Mr. Insanally (Guyana): Following closely, as it does, on the heels of last week's High-level Plenary Meeting, the remainder of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly is challenged to take steps towards the early implementation of the agreed outcome. In the eyes of many, the summit document (resolution 60/1) is less than satisfactory in terms of both its scope and its substance. Nonetheless, it represents a common platform on which we can build further to reach higher levels of international cooperation.

To you, Mr. President, my dear friend, falls the task of spearheading that enterprise. Your outstanding diplomatic experience assures us all that you will succeed in the mandate given to you. If I am to give you any advice on how you should now proceed, I would simply echo — and then perhaps very slightly paraphrase — the words of Dag Hammarskjöld, your compatriot and former Secretary-General, when he said, "Never measure the height of a mountain until you have reached the top". To this I would add, then you will see that the climb was not all that bad.

We owe a debt of gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Jean Ping of Gabon, the outgoing President, for his effective stewardship of the work of the Assembly during the fifty-ninth session. To the Secretary-General I wish to express our appreciation for his effort to equip our Organization for the challenges that confront today.

I would also like to offer our appreciation a thanks to our host country, the United States, and renew to it our assurances of sympathy with regard the severe losses suffered in the wake of Hurrica Katrina.

As was stated earlier by President Jagdeo Guyana (see A/60/PV.8), international developme goals — and especially the Millennium Developme Goals, which were set at the Summit five years ago a which we have just reviewed — remain an import benchmark for global development. Aimed at securi the important prerequisites for our economic and soc advancement in such areas as health, education a other basic services, they must be fully embraced a pursued by the international community.

My own country has been diligent in worki towards those objectives. Through a visionary povert reduction strategy and the allocation of more resourc to the social sector, we have been able to improve t lot of the disadvantaged among our population a enlarge their opportunities for a better li Unfortunately, however, further progress is now bei jeopardized by a number of untoward developmen Among these has been the recent revision of Europe agriculture policy, and more particularly the Europe Commission's proposal to drastically reduce the pri for the sugar exports of African, Caribbean and Pacif States. That proposal, if implemented, will serious affect our own sugar industry and will plunge many our people who depend on it into extreme poverty.

Our economy stands to lose some $40 million p year, a sum that nullifies the $8 million which we w have received as a result of the recent Group of Eig decisions on debt relief. The result is an example of th skewed and often incoherent policies pursued by son developed countries. Without consultation or warnin they adopt measures that wreak enormous havoc on th economies of developing countries, particularly th small and the vulnerable.

The only hope on the horizon for us lies in th promise held out by several recent initiatives, such a the Millennium Challenge Account of the Unite States, the International Finance Facility of the Unite Kingdom, the Action Against Hunger and Povert Initiative, led by Brazil and other States, and, mo latterly, the levy on air travel suggested by France an

others for the financing of development. As the review of the Millennium Development Goals has revealed, an additional $50 billion will be needed annually to reach the targets set. New and additional resources are therefore clearly required if we are to make any impact on global poverty.

While we in the developing world would prefer to rely on trade instead of aid for our development, the prospects for improving our position are bleak. The road from Cancún to Dalian to Hong Kong has been tedious, strewn with obstacles and, now, highly uncertain. As in New York, developed countries seem content with making broad declarations rather than specific commitments. The calls by small economies for special and differential treatment have thus far been only grudgingly acknowledged. Yet, without full regard for paragraph 35 of the Doha Declaration, countries like mine are likely to be further marginalized by the global economy.

Economic and social progress will come to the developing world only when its countries are allowed to have a say in the decision-making on development issues. The chapter in the *2005 Human Development Report* on our interdependent world quotes an African proverb that states that "Until the lions have their historians ... tales of hunting will always glorify the hunter" (*p. 113*). It is therefore time for the developing world, which has long been considered only an object in the development process, to be given a more active and participatory role in the process. Only then will we be able properly to address the outcome of our policies.

Many of the prescriptions for poverty eradication have been based on the time-worn theory of development that posits that the increasing economic prosperity of the developed world will eventually raise the standard of living for all States — that is to say, that a rising tide lifts all boats. But any serious analysis of that development paradigm as it has functioned over the past several decades will amply demonstrate that that is a very flawed concept. The gap between rich and poor countries continues to widen, a reality to which the *2005 Human Development Report* amply testifies.

There therefore has to be a serious global rethinking of what constitutes real and sustainable development. We cannot avoid the conclusion that while the realization of the Millennium Development Goals will provide the necessary foundation for development, true economic and social progress cannot be achieved in the absence of a more comprehensive policy framework that encompasses significant assistance and investment flows, wider debt relief, more equitable trade and economic cooperation and the transfer of science and technology for development purposes. That realization has led my Government to advocate at the United Nations the promotion of a new global human order: a more comprehensive and holistic strategy based on equity and social justice.

With regard to the second major area of concern addressed in the Secretary-General's report entitled "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005) — namely, the issues of democracy, human rights and security — let me say that Guyana, as a newly restored democracy, fully supports the promotion of all fundamental human freedoms and values. After all, they constitute the bedrock of the United Nations Charter and the basic rights of our peoples. We therefore welcome the initiative to establish a Democracy Fund to propagate the democratic ideal, as well as the setting up of a Human Rights Council to replace the current Commission on Human Rights.

Raising the status of the Commission on Human Rights can do much to enhance respect for human rights. We are concerned, however, about the representative character of the proposed Council and would be seriously distressed if it were to emerge as an elite directorate sitting in judgement of other States deemed to be less than equal. The holier-than-thou attitude of some countries on matters relating to democracy and human rights is not acceptable in an Organization founded on the principles of the equality of States, mutual understanding and respect. No one is perfect, and we all fall short of the glory of God. It would therefore be imperative for the General Assembly, in its further consideration of that proposal, to carefully examine such issues as the criteria for membership, size and voting procedures, in order to ensure that the principles of the Charter are not vitiated.

Finally, there is the third leg of the report's thematic tripod, namely, security. As is now universally recognized, security is a sine qua non for the protection of democracy and human rights, as well as for the promotion of development. It is therefore essential, in view of the vast array of threats to international peace and security, that we mount the necessary defences against the spread of terrorism,

transboundary crime, arms and drug trafficking, disease and the increasing incidence of natural disasters, which must now be an integral process of our development analysis. Unfortunately, however, the cost of such measures takes a very heavy toll on our limited human and financial resources — resources that can be better spent in the area of development.

To illustrate the challenge we face, let me cite the case of my own country, which, after suffering a disastrous flood earlier this year that led to a loss of almost 60 per cent of our gross domestic product (GDP) — according to an assessment by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean — now faces spiralling oil prices, amounting, in terms of expenditure, to 24 per cent of GDP and heavy revenue loss to our sugar-export earnings. How can one speak meaningfully in such circumstances of achieving the Millennium Development Goals? Small countries like ours have to find solutions to these pressing problems, or else run the risk of being thrust further back into underdevelopment.

For several decades now, we have been seeking to reform the United Nations system to make it more responsive to the challenges of our times. To some extent we have succeeded in our effort but, clearly, much more remains to be done. We therefore urge the President to hold to his promise and to pursue the revitalization of the General Assembly, the most democratic and representative of the United Nations organs, to enable it to promote the high principles and purposes of the Charter. The potential of the Assembly's role in fighting the scourge of war and promoting development is yet to be fully explored and exploited. At the same time, it is necessary to bring development issues, which are now largely the purview of multilateral financial institutions, more fully within the ambit of the United Nations, particularly the Economic and Social Council, where developing countries can have a greater voice on matters pertaining to their welfare.

Of some urgency is the reform of the Security Council, the organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is time that the Council be made more equitable in its composition, more democratic in its decision-making and more effective in its operation. The deliberations of the relevant working group have generated wide-spread agreement on the need for expansion of the Council's membership. The various permutations have been explored, and all options are on the table. We are now offered a historic opportunity to reform the Council — an opportunity that, if not taken now, may not soon come our way again. My delegation therefore urges the Assembly to expedite and conclude its work in this area.

The latest proposal for an advisory Peacebuilding Commission is a welcome one, since there is a clear relationship between conflict and development. Much too often, the gains made in the area of conflict resolution are rapidly negated by the lack of accompanying measures to preserve stability and encourage development. Such a commission, if properly conceived and constituted, can usefully complement and optimize the work of the principal organs of the United Nations.

In the end, however, if we are to achieve a stronger, more democratic and effective United Nations, we will have to go beyond the reform of its organs and agencies to a reform of the attitudes and behaviour of States, which, while giving lip service to such concepts as partnership, cohesion and interdependence, fail to practice those virtues in their relations with other States. There is always a vast divide between declarations and deeds. Yet, the implementation of the common agenda that we have set ourselves at the sixtieth session is not possible without a greater commitment to change.

As the *2005 Human Development Report* states, it cannot be business as usual for the United Nations. The Millennium Declaration must be more than a paper promise. We need to

> "mobilize the investment resources and develop the plans needed to build the defences that can stop the tsunami of world poverty". (*2005 Human Development Report*, *p. 2*)

That is the challenge issued to the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, and the yardstick by which its success will be judged. For the sake of the billions who continue to live in fear and want, we must seek to achieve that larger freedom that is the birthright of all humankind.

The President: May I say that I particularly appreciate the advice given by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guyana, former General Assembly President Insanally, who mentioned a quotation by Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld. As the Assembly may be

aware, Mr. Hammarskjöld was born 100 years ago this year. The quote he mentioned was:

> "Never measure the height of the mountain until you have reached the top; then you will see how low it was".

I referred to a similar quotation from his memoirs in my statement on 13 June, which I hope the Assembly will not mind my repeating, because it is related to the quotation read by former Assembly President Insanally. The quotation is:

> "Never look down to test the ground before taking your next step; only he who keeps his eye fixed on the far horizon will find the right road".

I now call on His Excellency The Honourable Pierre Stewart Pettigrew, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada.

Mr. Pettigrew (Canada) (*spoke in French*): The sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations is cause for inspiration, concern and action. It is a source of inspiration because 60 years of collective action for peace and development is an anniversary to celebrate. And what better time to do so than on the International Day of Peace? It is a cause for concern because the challenges, far from diminishing, have continued to grow, and we have not reached a consensus on a whole range of essential reforms. Some important components are missing. It is a call for action because all of us here have recognized that the United Nations remains an indispensable instrument and because change is still needed. We have no choice: we must move forward.

But we have come a long way. Two years ago, the United Nations was in a sorry state indeed; the situation in Iraq not only had divided the membership but had left deep scars within our institution. That is why I pay tribute to the Secretary-General for having established the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, whose report (A/59/565) has truly revolutionized how all of us think about the Organization's future.

Jeffrey Sachs and his colleagues also delivered to us a remarkable document on "Investing in Development" — development that Canada has done so much to promote ever since the era of Lester Pearson. In "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005), the Secretary-General summarized that work with clarity and discernment and set out an ambitious plan for us. We have not adopted all of his recommendations — far from it. We could have, and should have, done better. The summit is by no means the end of the debate. To the contrary, we have a mandate to continue our efforts and to make this sixtieth-anniversary year a year of reform.

We are all aware of the risks of unilateralism or piecemeal multilateralism. But we are not sufficiently aware that humanity's future lies in accepting the inextricable links among security, development and human rights.

To predict the future is to understand the past, so it behoves us all to look back over the 60 years of our Organization. The contribution of the United Nations to the progress of humanity is indisputable. The Organization's successes, more than its failures, show us the path to take so that we can meet current and future challenges.

Let us not forget that in 1945 the whole world was rising from ruins and States were determined that that would never happen again. So it is not surprising that the first objective expressed in the Charter of the United Nations centred on security so as to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

We have known the horrors of war over the past 60 years, but we have avoided descending into the hell of a third world war. How did we do that? At the United Nations, the super-Powers had no choice. Under the aegis of the Organization, they concluded major disarmament and arms control agreements. In sum, the role played by the United Nations in ending the stand off between East and West is one of the greatest successes of the past century.

(*spoke in English*)

Sixty years ago, the nations meeting in San Francisco set the second objective: to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small. The founders of the United Nations foresaw that if we were to avoid the conflicts of the past, the world of tomorrow needed to be more human. With that in mind, Canada's John Humphrey worked hard to help draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We have become ever more demanding about the protection of human rights — including women's rights — as well we should be. We are duty-bound to prevent or combat flagrant violations, which still plague the world. The Commission on Human Rights has played a key role in that respect, but its serious shortcomings unfortunately eclipse its valuable contributions, necessitating its replacement.

Mr. Mwakwere (Kenya), Vice-President, took the Chair.

History shows that democracy and human rights go hand in hand. The United Nations has entrenched human rights through a series of legal instruments that Governments concluded under the Organization's aegis and has extended a range of protections, such as conventions on eliminating discrimination against women, on children's rights and against torture.

The United Nations remains a key forum for debating human rights failures around the world. And it is in that area that the Organization has played a leading role in changing global culture, fostering the acceptance of new standards and setting criteria for judging Governments' actions. That is another remarkable success for the United Nations.

The third objective of the Charter called on Members to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained. For 60 years, the United Nations has been at the heart of a vast network of bilateral and regional treaties covering nearly the gamut of international relations. In so doing, the Organization has helped to bring about an infinitely more integrated world where interactions among peoples take place in a predictable fashion and within a defined regulatory framework. This global legal framework is the foundation of peace. Where the framework has not yet taken shape, conflicts multiply. The world needs the United Nations to perfect this tremendous asset.

The fourth objective of the Charter touched at the heart of our debate today on the Millennium Development Goals, calling on members to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. That message was prophetic at the time. The founders of the United Nations already foresaw that beyond the massive destruction of 1939 to 1945, a fundamental poverty afflicted almost every country and region in the world — a poverty that had to be fought unwaveringly.

Today, we salute their hope and their desire to create a better, safer and more prosperous world. Among the surest ways in which to create that type of world are the growing participation of women in economic, civil and political life and the emergence of a middle class, both of which justify hope for real progress on the road to growth. Those promising trends need to be accelerated.

The United Nations has played a fundamental role on that front. Its specialized agencies and affiliates have helped set development objectives and have delivered the bulk of international aid. Thanks to those efforts, the world is a better place to live in today. And today, five years after the Millennium Development Goals were adopted, the United Nations is where the world's nations recall their common commitment to development, with a keener understanding, since the Monterrey summit, of the obligations that we all must bear.

With respect to the four major objectives of the Charter, comparing ideals against reality inevitably brings disappointment. For each major step forward, there have been many failures, in particular the absence of a collective will to adapt our institution to current needs.

Where are we now, and what do we need to do to better respond to our hopes? The starting point is clearly the document (resolution 60/1) approved by heads of State or Government last week. That document is a foundation on which, with a great deal of political will on the part of all Members, we can think of renewing the United Nations. In any case, we have a working framework for the years to come.

I am especially pleased that the document includes strong references to development and to the values and principles that inspire us. The declaration also provides clear, important directions on United Nations management, transparency and accountability. But we need to go much further in that direction.

I would now like to address some of the points raised in the declaration. First is the "responsibility to protect". In recognizing that responsibility, this body has taken a step that goes beyond utterances of "Never again" — a step that brings us closer to making

genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity things of the past. We now need to implement it.

Secondly, with respect to the Human Rights Council, Canada is disappointed that members did not show greater courage. We have not established the Council; we have only the mandate to work on that issue this year. We need such a Council because it will help us take an in-depth look at situations of concern to us, such as that in Iran. Canada's position is clear: the Council must be a permanent body, with members elected by a two-thirds majority, on the basis of specific criteria, and it must provide for a system of peer review, starting with the countries that will sit on the Council. I am pleased, however, that the High Commissioner for Human Rights will have a bigger budget.

(*spoke in French*)

Thirdly, let me turn to the Peacebuilding Commission. Here again, our work is unfinished. A reference to a sequential relationship between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council could have been a solution to the question of relations between the Commission and existing bodies.

The fourth point is global health. The United Nations must make every effort to protect threatened populations. HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria still plague the world, to our collective shame. We have a shared responsibility to eliminate those diseases; we can and must do better. We need to prepare for pandemics, including avian flu, on which Canada recently hosted an international meeting of health ministers.

Fifthly, with respect to terrorism, the attacks that took place this past summer in London, in Egypt and elsewhere make it more necessary than ever that there be a global convention in the war on terror.

But we must also bear in mind that the overall global security architecture must be strengthened, from light weapons to weapons of mass destruction, including the whole range of disarmament and arms control measures. We can certainly be heartened by the progress that is being made in the Middle East, Haiti, the Sudan and Afghanistan, high-priority regions for Canada and where United Nations action is often exemplary. But that success remains fragile, and the commitment of the United Nations must continue.

Sixthly, concerning the environment, if we want to leave future generations a planet that is a healthy place to live, we need jointly to manage its environment. In less than two months, Montreal will play host to a climate-change conference that should represent a milestone in terms of our common thinking and action in the face of that phenomenon. We will be discussing the progress made in implementing the Kyoto Protocol and new possibilities for action in the decades to come.

Let me conclude with a few thoughts on what the final document does not say, or at least does not say well.

First, on disarmament, it is deplorable that a United Nations outcome document could contain not one paragraph on disarmament and non-proliferation at a time when we are debating Iran's and North Korea's nuclear programmes.

Secondly, on women's rights, it is deeply regrettable that the document could not even reiterate as forcefully the commitments made 10 years ago in Beijing or Cairo on women's rights and gender equality, despite the fact that they lie at the very heart of the Millennium Development Goals. All Member States need to implement their provisions and move from promises to action.

Thirdly, on the International Criminal Court, Canada regrets the absence of any reference in the document to the International Criminal Court as well as its silence on commitments to end impunity. It is imperative that the United Nations address the issue of impunity. Two years ago, when the Rome Statute came into force, the Secretary- General clearly stated that "the time is at last coming when humanity no longer has to bear impotent witness to the worst atrocities, because those tempted to commit such crimes will know that justice awaits them".

We urge all States to sign and ratify the Rome Statute. Together, we will break the cycle of impunity, and justice will be done for the victims of such crimes.

We are meeting in New York today to help solve humanity's problems. But while this Hall has witnessed too many unresolved debates and far too much costly inaction, the challenges and problems we discuss lie far afield. Over the years we have confronted grave challenges in the Sudan, Haiti, Kosovo and Rwanda, and in many other places. In some cases, we can hold

our heads high; in others, we need to recognize, and learn from, our mistakes and failures. I think we have charted the course, but we still have far to travel.

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Shaheed, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Maldives.

Mr. Shaheed (Maldives): Mr. President, on behalf of my delegation, allow me to congratulate Mr. Jan Eliasson on his election to preside over this session of the General Assembly. I should like also to take this opportunity to pay tribute to his predecessor for the exemplary manner in which he guided the work of the fifty-ninth session of the Assembly.

Allow me also to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his inspiring report entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all".

It was 40 years ago today that the Maldives was admitted to the membership of the United Nations. We are very proud of that milestone. We were then the smallest country to have joined the United Nations, a fact which led to questions being asked in some quarters as to the viability of full membership for small States and their ability to assume it. We survived the so-called mini-State debate, thereby reinforcing the concept of the sovereign equality of all States, regardless of size. We also survived the cold war without losing the peace and stability that have been so essential to the social and economic progress of our people.

But today we are facing a much more challenging task and much more serious questions about the economic viability of the country, whose economy has been devastated by the Indian Ocean tsunami. Compared to other affected countries, the loss of life and property damage in the Maldives were small in absolute numbers. But in proportionate terms, we are the worst-affected country.

Some 62 per cent of the gross domestic product has been destroyed. More than 7 per cent of the population is internally displaced. The social and economic infrastructure was damaged or destroyed in over one quarter of all inhabited islands, 12 of which are now nothing but rubble.

Given the nationwide scale of destruction, timely assistance from the international community was crucial in dealing with the emergency relief requirements. We thank all nations, peoples and organizations for their generosity.

I would also like to extend a special vote of appreciation and thanks to President Bill Clinton, the United Nations Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery, for his commitment and leadership in coordinating international efforts to assist affected countries with the recovery. We are particularly grateful for his continued engagement, given that nearly nine months after the tsunami, the situation in the country has not eased.

There are still major funding gaps in the national economic recovery programme. An economy which had grown at an average of 8 per cent per annum during the past two decades is now forecast to contract by 3 per cent. Rising oil prices, unforeseen tsunami-related expenditures and tourism revenue shortfall are creating significant financial pressures requiring, for the first time in our history, budget support from donors.

As a small country, the Maldives lays great store on assistance from the international community for its survival. We hope that our appeals for assistance will result in the extension of the support that is required to tide us over the current blip in the economy.

It is ironic that just six days before the tsunami struck, the Assembly had voted to begin a transition period for the Maldives for graduation from least developed country status. While we recognize the achievements of our people through their diligent efforts and the support of the donor community, it is vital that trade preferences and other concessions not be phased out through graduation before the country recovers from the extensive destruction caused by the tsunami.

The tsunami that struck the Indian Ocean was a grim reminder of the ferocity of the elements and the helplessness of communities exposed to natural disasters. Just as we support the establishment of a tsunami early warning system for the Indian Ocean, our thoughts are also with the millions of people in the United States, India, China, Japan and elsewhere who recently have faced extreme weather events which brought unprecedented death, destruction and pain. Our hearts go out to those in New Orleans affected by Hurricane Katrina.

One cannot overstate the importance of protecting the environment and saving lives. There is no longer a frontline comprising only small low-lying island States. Indeed, climate change can cause destruction anytime and anywhere. Prevention is the only option when there is no cure. We hope that the Kyoto Protocol will be implemented with full effectiveness.

Small States have the narrowest margins of safety and the least ability to mitigate or overcome environmental catastrophes. We would like to assert the critical importance of the early and effective implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for Small Island Developing States.

Not only is the Maldives seeking to build back better after the tsunami but we are also going through a historic transformation of the governance structures of the country. The Agenda for Democracy and Reform being pursued by the Government focuses not only on making the Maldives a twenty-first century democracy, but also on strengthening human rights protection.

With the acceleration of the Government's reform programme over the past two years, sweeping changes have been brought to the political landscape of the Maldives. Political pluralism has been strengthened by introducing, for the first time in the country's history, a multiparty system. The country is also undertaking unprecedented legal and judicial reforms aimed at a comprehensive modernization of the criminal justice system in order to bring it into compliance with international norms and standards.

A Constitutional Assembly is in session to draw up a modern democratic constitution to embed liberal democracy in the country and strengthen adherence to international standards in civil liberties and the protection of human rights.

Just last week, the Maldives signed on to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. We are already committed to full transparency and openness in safeguarding human rights in the Maldives. We believe that the engagement of the international community is one of the strongest safeguards in protecting human rights. We have already acceded to a number of conventions on human rights and we are confident that the measures currently under way in the national reform programme will enable us to fully comply with and become parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

To recall Sir Winston Churchill, it would not be enough to say that we will do all that we can. Rather, we would like to say that we will do all that is required, and then some, to ensure that our people live in larger freedom, as envisaged in the United Nations Charter.

We are mindful that under Article 2, paragraph 7, of the United Nations Charter Member States are not required to submit matters within their domestic jurisdiction for settlement in United Nations forums, but the Maldives believes that its aspirations to build a modern and mature democracy are important enough to be articulated before this Assembly. Moreover, given our limited resources and dearth of technical expertise, the support of the international community is vital for the success of the ambitious democracy project being pursued by the Government. We are indeed encouraged by the initiative to establish a Democracy Fund. I gratefully acknowledge the support being extended to us by the United Nations system and our bilateral partners in this historic enterprise in the Maldives.

Today, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the admission of the Maldives to the United Nations, my President wrote to the Secretary-General thanking him and the United Nations membership for their collaboration and support over the past four decades on matters of crucial national interest to the Maldives: we recall the support given by this Assembly to the requirements of protection and security of small States; we acknowledge the important role played by the United Nations membership in advancing efforts to protect the global environment; and we are gratified by the assistance that we are getting towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Already we are on track for attaining most of the MDGs.

We hope that the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting (resolution 60/1) will expedite the march of countries towards attainment of the MDGs and towards conquering disease, despair and deprivation.

The July bombings in London and other incidents of terrorism have shocked and horrified us. We hope that measures agreed upon to combat international terrorism, strengthen peace and international security, promote peacebuilding and strengthen the United

Nations machinery on human rights protection will be followed up effectively.

Sound multilateralism is crucial to our quest for a better world in an age of globalization. It is therefore important that the effectiveness of the United Nations be strengthened.

We welcome the proposals made by the Secretary-General on all aspects of United Nations reform. While we recognize the need for comprehensive reforms, we hope that the reforms of the Security Council will be completed before the year's end in order to enable it to reflect more fully the realities of the twenty-first century. Our support of the Group of Four proposal is based on those considerations and we hope that there will be wide support for it.

We have consistently expressed concern about conflict and tension in the Middle East. We are encouraged by the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. We hope that this will be a first step in the movement towards a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate the firm commitment of the Maldives to the principles and purposes enshrined in the United Nations Charter. We will work with the other members of the international community to uphold and promote those lofty objectives.

We seek a world, as envisioned 60 years ago in the United Nations Charter, of all peoples living in larger freedom, free from want, free from fear and with the dignity that God almighty bestowed on all of us.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Tsend Munkh-Orgil, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia.

Mr. Munkh-Orgil (Mongolia): Let me begin by congratulating the President of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Jean Ping, for his tireless efforts in the lead-up to the summit meeting and for his contribution to the elaboration and adoption of the outcome document (resolution 60/1). Mongolia considers the outcome document, with all its omissions, to be another important milestone in forging global consensus on development, and pledges to contribute its modest share to the successful implementation of the commitments contained therein. In this connection, I would also like to commend our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his leadership and vision and to wish him well in his bold reform activities. I also warmly congratulate Mr. Jan Eliasson on his well-deserved election to the presidency and express our confidence that his skill, experience and intimate knowledge of the matters at hand will enable us to successfully follow through on the commitments made by our leaders last week in this Assembly.

Mongolia is poised to achieve most of its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on education, gender, child and maternal health and combating various diseases by 2015. Capitalizing on its 1990 system of public health and education and a traditional culture of gender equality, Mongolia is well on track to achieve, by 2015, universal primary education and literacy, eliminate gender disparity at all levels of education, and reduce its child mortality rate by two-thirds and maternal mortality rate by three fourths. However, the most important goal of halving poverty by 2015 looks highly elusive, if not unachievable, at the moment. Aware of its responsibility for its own development, Mongolia has, by and large, managed its public finances responsibly and maintained macroeconomic stability. It has done its utmost to adopt and implement sound national policies and development strategies and to introduce good governance and the rule of law.

Yet, like many other small, vulnerable and commodity-dependent economies, Mongolia's development is severely handicapped by many factors well beyond its control. Skyrocketing oil prices, for instance, are taking a serious toll on economic growth, engulfing whatever gains we made earlier on, and are exposing already vulnerable societies to increased hardship and uncertainty. Many frustrated oil-importing developing countries have articulated a number of interesting ideas during this general debate, and we urge the international financial institutions and the oil producers to heed our collective appeal.

Last week world leaders once again reaffirmed their commitment to address the special needs of the landlocked countries and their special difficulties in integrating into multilateral trading systems. Full, timely and effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and the Sao Paulo Consensus, adopted at the eleventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development will provide a significant boost to the development and poverty

reduction efforts of the landlocked countries, including Mongolia. Mongolia spends a significant portion of its gross domestic product (GDP) on transit transportation and insurance costs through its two neighbours, Russia and China, roughly double the transportation costs of other developing countries. Since 1998, Mongolia has been negotiating with these two neighbours on a framework agreement on transit transport to reduce transit transportation costs and related cumbersome procedures, both in crossing the land border and in trans-shipment at ports. Six rounds of talks ended for the most part inconclusively, but we hope that with the renewed commitment of our leaders to the Almaty Declaration, agreement will be within our collective reach.

Mongolia is a small economy, highly vulnerable to commodity market fluctuations and weather and climatic conditions. The call made in the Summit Outcome document (resolution 60/1) on the need to support the efforts of commodity-dependent countries to restructure, diversify and strengthen the competitiveness of their commodity sectors merits a swift response from the international community. In this regard, I wish to draw the attention of this Assembly to the important recommendations derived from the Multi-Stakeholder Consultations organized by the New Rules for the Global Finance Coalition in preparation for the summit. Recommendations include commodity price arrangements and stabilization tools and the establishment of a rapid-responding, overarching, grant-financed shocks facility for low-income commodity-dependent countries. Immediate establishment of such a facility would make a tangible contribution to our efforts to reduce poverty.

Mongolia is highly susceptible to natural disasters, which cause loss of life and extensive damage to its economy. In addition, desertification, deforestation and soil erosion hamper our development efforts. We urge the international community to redouble its efforts to address these trans-boundary threats collectively. For our part, we will continue to take specific measures in combating desertification, in using land resources properly and in protecting forests by introducing and implementing special protective strategies.

Despite an encouraging increase in official development assistance (ODA) in recent years, after a decade of steady decline, the world is still well short of achieving the long-standing target of 0.7 per cent of GDP. We are encouraged that the war against poverty will now be waged more aggressively with the commitment of the world leaders to increase ODA to developing countries by $50 billion a year by the year 2010. However, it is imperative to increase the aid quantity to a sufficient level to make multiple investments in the health, education and economic infrastructure needed to break cycles of deprivation and ensure sustained growth. Furthermore, the quality of aid has to be improved, as per the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of March 2005, with a particular emphasis on providing stable and predictable multi-year financing, and with a focus on development goals, mutual accountability, building institutional capacity, untying aid, reducing transaction costs and bureaucratic procedures and increasing the recipient's ownership of aid.

Mongolia fully endorses the recommendation of the Secretary-General that, starting in 2005, developing countries with sound, transparent and accountable national strategies should receive a sufficient increase in aid, of sufficient quality and timeliness to enable them to achieve their Millennium Development Goals. In addition, new and innovative sources of financing, including an International Finance Facility, quick-impact initiatives and debt-conversion for MDG implementation projects should urgently be put in place.

Mongolia, for one, resolves to introduce free school lunches, starting with those for primary schoolchildren, as a quick-impact initiative.

Despite the importance of aid for developing countries, trade and investment play a pivotal role in ensuring sustainable development. According to the *2005 Human Development Report*, trade barriers faced by developing countries exporting to developed countries are three to four times higher than those faced by developed countries when they trade with each other. The current multilateral trade negotiations have not produced a tangible outcome that would meet our expectations from the Doha development agenda. The Doha Round, to be successful, should result in establishing fairer and more favourable terms of trade for developing countries, especially those with special needs, in the form of enhanced and predictable market access and assistance in building productive and trade capacities. Mongolia appreciates the decision of the European Union to provide duty-free access to over 7,200 goods from small and vulnerable economies,

including Mongolia, under the special Generalized System of Preferences Plus scheme. Increased and better access means that more families will be able to leave destitution and poverty behind.

The Summit Outcome emphasized once again the importance of a timely, effective, comprehensive and durable solution to the debt problems of developing countries. In assessing the eligibility of countries for debt relief, we urge the donor community not to limit itself to mere statistics or rigid categorizations such as "least developed countries". Debt relief should be considered comprehensively, taking into account the history and impact of the debt on the development of the recipient country and its actual capacity to repay. Many of these factors were taken into account when Mongolia negotiated its debt repayment with Russia. I would like to take this opportunity to express from this podium the gratitude of my Government to the Government of the Russian Federation for its display of solidarity and political and economic pragmatism in resolving this issue, so important for us.

We believe that education is an engine for development, a guarantee of the respect for human rights and a pillar of democracy. Mongolia has made substantial efforts in the second half of the last century to develop its education system. As a result, the adult literacy rate has reached 97.8 per cent. Nonetheless, taking stock of our recent past, we have drawn lessons so as to further improve the deliverables of the education system. Stronger emphasis is now placed on vocational and technical training, the quality of education, addressing functional illiteracy against the backdrop of the rapid advance of information and communications technology and the universal usage of English. These policy measures are taken in accordance with the Dakar Framework for Action and the United Nations Literacy Decade.

Mongolia welcomes the strong focus on human rights, rule of law and democracy in the Summit Outcome. Democracy and rule of law are not part of a state of affairs that can be arranged or introduced overnight. We believe that fostering democracy and rule of law is a continuous process, and we hope that this long-term, sustained approach will prevail in the activities of United Nations institutions. We support the efforts of the United Nations to make democracy a universal environment for global governance. We believe that the United Nations Democracy Fund is an important product in the overall reform process, as it highlights the importance of democracy and the role of the Organization. Mongolia believes that the Fund should serve as a vital instrument to assist Member States in the consolidation of democracy and implementation of their commitments, including the Ulaanbaatar Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies in 2003 and approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 58/13.

We all agree that the United Nations must be strengthened to meet the challenges of the new millennium. This will be an all-encompassing task that would involve system-wide reform of the Organization to bring it in line with the realities of our era, including, where necessary, changes in composition, mandates, procedures and working methods of the principal and subsidiary organs, the various programmes and funds, as well as the establishment of new or reinvigoration of existing bodies. Overall, United Nations assistance needs to be focused, results-oriented and tailored to the priority development needs of the countries concerned. It has to be designed to bring a tangible and speedy impact on the lives of ordinary people and to help them escape the trap of poverty and live in dignity, free from want. Accountability, oversight, management performance and transparency of the Secretariat must be brought to a new level of efficiency, professionalism and ethical conduct on a par with the best corporate governance practices.

Mongolia supports the idea of empowering the Secretary-General, the chief administrative officer of the United Nations, with greater authority and flexibility in administering the work of the Organization in line with the Charter's provisions. All too often, sound management reforms proposed by the Secretary-General have been stalled by us, the Member States.

In conclusion, Mr. President, let me voice Mongolia's confidence that we collectively will succeed in reforming our world Organization, and the renewed and reinvigorated United Nations will be better equipped to address effectively the manifold challenges that lie ahead.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Cyril Svoboda, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Svoboda (Czech Republic): Let me begin by congratulating Mr. Eliasson on his election to the

presidency. He is at the steering wheel of one of the most challenging sessions of the General Assembly in history — not only because it is the sixtieth anniversary of our Organization but mainly because of our agenda and the gravity of problems awaiting resolution. While thanking his able and devoted predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping, I would like to wish the President every success in the coming months of hard and hopefully rewarding work.

The European Union invested a huge effort in the preparations for both the High-level Plenary Meeting and our current session, and the Czech Republic was an integral and active part of this process. We heard the statement of the European Union presidency a few days ago, and I have no intention of repeating it. Rather, let me present here several ideas and comments of a more general nature.

Millions of our fellow human beings in Africa and elsewhere are trapped in absolute poverty, with little or no access to education, medical and other services, and are deprived of a dignified existence. In their regions or in other parts of the world, fascinating technical achievements and thriving economies enable large numbers of people to enjoy an unprecedentedly high quality of life. Some may simply conclude that there are several distinct worlds on our planet. But while the gaps may still be widening, let us be sure that we all live in only one increasingly interconnected world. There is no way to separate the rich from the poor or to separate different ethnic groups. And the responsibility for our future is equally indivisible.

Moreover, we are repeatedly reminded that despite many advancements this world is still very fragile and vulnerable. What is the common feature of the 9/11, Bali, Madrid, Beslan, Baghdad or London terrorist attacks; floods in China or in Central Europe in 2002 and again in 2005; drought in parts of Africa; the Indian Ocean tsunami; and devastating hurricanes in the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico? They all expose in their own way the vulnerability and fragility of our civilization.

Developed or developing, big or small, we continue to be vulnerable to the forces of nature as well as the forces of evil. Fortunately, the worst of situations tends to awaken the best in human character: after any such disaster or terrorist attack we have seen raising waves of solidarity on a global scale, we have seen renewed determination to fight the evil.

It is our duty to tap this positive energy. Although no one will ever achieve 100 per cent security, much can be done by deepening our cooperation, strengthening preventive measures, stepping up our efforts in combating terrorism, enhancing the mechanisms of development and humanitarian aid and, in the long run, simply fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals. If reformed and mandated, the United Nations can play a central role in this process.

Last year, many of us spoke of reform, and reform has indeed been one of the most frequently used words since then. There was much expectation in the air, much sincere effort to bring about change, as well as many brilliant contributions to the debate: the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change, the final report of the United Nations Millennium Project "Investing in Development" (the Sachs report) and the Secretary-General's report "In Larger Freedom".

After several rounds of discussion, we could say we knew the diagnosis and could prescribe the necessary medication, hoping that the summit would add the most needed ingredients: the political will and the means of delivery.

So, was the summit a success or a failure? I tend to view its results, the outcome document, with sober optimism. The challenge was enormous: to bring together development, security and human rights and to craft a new delicate balance among the elements that constitute our global agenda. In my view, the summit managed — and this could be its major achievement — to set the tone, to set at least rough parameters of a new equation, the fine-tuning of the details being left for the coming months. We have guidance for further talks on assistance and relief for developing countries. We have a prospect of increasing development aid, including from the Czech Republic.

At the summit, we agreed that the human rights machinery needed strengthening and redesigning. Indeed, it was probably the first time at such a major event that human rights was placed on an equal footing with issues such as development and security. But many pieces of the puzzle have yet to be put in place.

In shaping the future Human Rights Council, we have to make sure that the progressive features and experience of the Human Rights Commission are not lost, while avoiding its weaknesses and what specifically did not work, securing cooperation from

countries such as Belarus, Cuba, Myanmar, Zimbabwe and others which repeatedly failed to respond adequately to the international community's concerns about human rights.

Moreover, the summit reinforced our commitment to join forces in fighting terrorism, made the groundbreaking decision to create the Peacebuilding Commission and endorsed the twin concepts of responsibility to protect and human security — all of which bring new hope to those facing lawlessness and oppression and which extend existing standards of peace and security.

But there are also areas where the summit failed: among others, disarmament and non-proliferation and, most notably, the expansion of the Security Council. Our reform mission remains unfinished, but must continue.

If it is to face up to new challenges and tasks, the Secretariat must be strong and healthy. It has to undergo profound reform. The need for such a reform is further underlined by the recent findings of the Volcker report. I welcome the emphasis that the summit put on United Nations management and its call for efficiency, effectiveness and accountability.

All in all, the summit took many steps in the right direction, shaping our vision and sharpening our tools. But there is another, hidden part of the story. Do all of us really want the United Nations to grow stronger and more efficient? Will a better, reformed — and truly universal — United Nations be able to spare the world all of its troubles? Will it be able to find solutions to every conflict and bring lasting peace to every notorious hot spot, including the Balkans, the Middle East, Iraq, Afghanistan and a number of places in Africa? Will it be able to prevent millions of people from dying from hunger and diseases such as HIV/AIDS? Will it be strong enough to guarantee and promote democracy and human rights?

There is hope, and there is a chance — but the answer depends on us. I can assure the Assembly that the Czech Republic is ready to carry out its part of the assignment, including in the Security Council if elected for the period 2008-2009.

The President: I now give the floor to The Honourable Sam Kutesa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uganda.

Mr. Kutesa (Uganda): I should like first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to preside over the General Assembly at this important session, at which we pledge our full cooperation. I also wish to thank your predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping, for having conducted the proceedings of the fifty-ninth session so efficiently and for having spearheaded the vital negotiations on the outcome document adopted by the summit.

I must also express my gratitude to the Secretary-General for his leadership, especially his efforts to reform the United Nations so as to make it more responsive to the dynamics and demands of the current world.

The founding fathers of the United Nations dreamed of an organization that would be able, in the words of the Charter, to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. It was in pursuit of that dream that the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). That was a milestone in the realization of one of the purposes and principles of the Charter — to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all and to be the centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in attaining those common ends.

A great deal has been done since the Millennium Summit in 2000, at both national and international levels, to attain the objectives that we set ourselves in the MDGs. Asia and Latin America have progressed well, while Oceania and Africa have not been quite as successful. On the whole, Africa's performance has shown mixed results. Some regions, especially in North Africa, have registered positive achievements, while others have fared negatively.

In a globalized world, the future and welfare of all are interlinked. Poverty in one part of the world threatens peace and security globally. Equally, an epidemic in a remote village in Africa threatens the health of the prosperous individual in New York. In essence, we all share a common fate. The international community has therefore a self-interested obligation to help Africa emerge from its current predicament. Let the wealth of some enhance the welfare of all.

Uganda hopes that the World Summit Outcome resolution will be more than a real commitment to

improving the welfare of the world's poor and to making the United Nations the vanguard for the aspirations of all. We hope that it will not suffer the fate of the commitments that preceded it.

Peace and security is a prerequisite for development. One of the reasons why Africa has failed to register substantial achievements with regard to the MDGs is lack of stability, peace and security. Conflicts, wars and civil strife afflicting the continent have acted as disincentives to development. The 1885 Berlin Conference split Africa up, without due regard to the long-term interests of the African peoples. The Great Lakes region found itself at the confluence of all the colonial Powers. That confluence created a political and social situation that has, over the years, proved difficult to manage. It is a complex situation, with both positive and negative tendencies. The cold war further exacerbated the situation as the East battled the West for influence. Indeed, former Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold lost his life in the context of that explosive political mix.

As Africa struggles to set its house in order, Uganda has identified four main causes of conflict on the continent which negative forces have exploited for their own ends. They include parasitic vested interests; superficiality and obscurantism in identifying and dealing with those parasitic interests and their effects on a particular country or group of countries; weak and disoriented local leadership; and, finally, the pre-industrial characteristics of Africa.

Those are the core causes of conflict, although there are others. Paying clear and careful attention to them could provide a vital springboard from which long-term solutions could be found.

The conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region in general is caused by a combination of those factors. Those with the most to lose in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are marginalized, while real issues of statecraft have been pushed to the periphery. No attention is being given to creating institutions and infrastructure that can sustain the State.

The integration of armed factions into one single national armed force is half-hearted. How can a State exist without the minimum pillars of support, such as an army capable of defending its territorial integrity?

The view that justice should precede integration is wrong, in our opinion. While justice is important, it is Uganda's belief that it should not take precedence over the integration of armed groups. We should integrate all factions, and then seek to punish those that are guilty of any offences later. Uganda advocates the concept of provisional immunity or *immunité provisoire*, as it is referred to in Burundi. On the other hand, equal attention needs to be given to issues of development, rehabilitation and the recovery of the economy. A growing economy is necessary for sustainable peace. What we are witnessing today is a rush to elections and political agendas without due regard being given to the institutions and infrastructure necessary for the long-term sustainability of peace. We have travelled this road before, with disastrous consequences. Let the immediate past of the continent be a guiding lesson for all of us.

The Lusaka peace accord provided a strong mechanism enabling the region and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to play complementary roles in the peace process. Unfortunately, it has been abandoned. The central problem of negative forces, which the agreement recognized, has been put on the back burner. For over five years, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) has made no significant effort to ensure the demobilization and disarmament of those groups, thus leaving in place the seeds of future conflict. We are, however, hopeful that our efforts, both at the bilateral level and in the Tripartite Commission, which is composed of Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with the participation of Burundi, will iron out those problems and allow our region to attain peace and stability.

For some time now, the situation in Burundi has been a real concern to the Great Lakes region and to the international community at large. The destruction and loss of life that took place spurred the regional States, together with South Africa, to undertake and spearhead a peace initiative. It was a long and arduous process. With the support of the United Nations and the international community, signs of success are today evident.

In the past few months, the people of Burundi elected their leaders in local, parliamentary and, finally, presidential elections. They look to the future with hope. Uganda welcomes His Excellency Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza, the new President of Burundi,

and we look forward to working with him to consolidate peace in the region. The international community and the United Nations have an obligation to make peace sustainable. Reconstruction, rehabilitation and development will be necessary. We hope that due attention is given to institutional capacity-building so that Burundi does not relapse into the fratricidal anarchy that had been its bane over the past decade.

After two decades of conflict in southern Sudan, the people of the Sudan, led by the Government and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement and Army (SPLM/A), signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement earlier this year. The guns are silent, and the long-tortured people of southern Sudan are now enjoying some peace. It is unfortunate that the late John Garang passed away at a time when implementation of the Agreement was in its early stages. We are confident that given the commitment of both the Government of the Sudan and SPLM the peace agreement will hold and will be comprehensively implemented. We are also confident that the Sudan is headed for a peaceful future. We hope that other conflicts, such as that in Darfur, will be peacefully resolved using the Comprehensive Peace Agreement as an inspiration and a model.

The signature and implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in the Sudan has led to increased optimism about peace in northern Uganda. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a terrorist group that has long maimed, kidnapped and terrorized the civilian population of northern Uganda, for a long time had sanctuary in southern Sudan, from where it launched its terrorist activities. With the cooperation of the Sudanese Government, including SPLA/SPLM in the south, these terrorists are being flushed out from southern Sudan. Uganda's strategy of peace negotiations combined with maximum military pressure has significantly reduced the LRA's capacity to commit evil. However, as peace returns to the region, we need international cooperation and assistance to supplement the Government of Uganda's post-conflict humanitarian, rehabilitation and development programme, which is already under way in northern Uganda.

Somalia has been in a state of anarchy for more than a decade and a half. Peace efforts by the international community and the United Nations have been anything but timid. A sense of frustration on the part of the United Nations has led to resignation and despair, thus condemning the Somali people to a state of bondage and being held hostage by the warlords.

It is in this void that the regional States, under the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), took on the mantle of negotiating peace and re-establishing order. Anarchy is contagious. We cannot feel safe in a situation pregnant with arms trafficking, religious extremism, the dumping of radioactive waste and the potential for breeding terrorists in the region. These are realistic threats, and IGAD cannot ignore them. The international community — and, most especially, the members of the Security Council — should not be deluded by geographical distance. A potential threat to international peace truly exists in Somalia.

It is in view of these current and latent threats that the members of IGAD took upon themselves to negotiate with Somalia for peace. Over a period of two years, we went through a very laborious and sometimes frustrating negotiating process until agreement was reached on formation of a Government of national unity last year. At the end of the process, we expected the Security Council to join us in the pursuit of peace. We expected that all efforts would be geared towards creating the necessary legal and political atmosphere to facilitate the realization of peace for the long-suffering people of Somalia.

We were, however, deeply disappointed when the Council, in its wisdom, acted otherwise, leaving the region and, most important, the Somali people to their fate. The decision to uphold the arms embargo and to reject even its partial lifting denied the region a chance to implement the peace process to its logical end. We hope that it is not too late for the Council to evaluate and review its position.

Let me briefly make some comments on the proposed reform of the United Nations. The institution we have today was conceived and created 60 years ago. The sense of triumphalism of the victors in the Second World War, the anguish of the vanquished and the assumed indifference of the colonial peoples, especially in Africa, formed the background to the run-up to the creation of the United Nations.

The institution that emerged reflected those realities. Nowhere within the United Nations, was this more apparent than in the Security Council. The victors reserved for themselves the right to determine the

destiny of others. This was done without due regard for the interests of those that the decisions were to affect most. Today, the situation has dramatically changed. Colonial peoples have gained independence, and the international power structure has changed.

Decisions of the Security Council need wider support diplomatically, financially and militarily in order to be implemented. It has, therefore, become an imperative to reform the Security Council and make it more representative and reflective of the realities of today's world.

In Africa, where most Security Council mandated operations take place, we believe that it is time for the continent, composed of 53 States, to have a real say in how those operations are formulated and implemented. Today, Africa is the only continent that has no representation at the real decision-making level of the Council. It is for these reasons that we demand that the continent be given two permanent seats with veto and two additional non-permanent seats. A Council thus composed will be more democratic and credible and will have its decisions more widely accepted.

While the dream of the founding fathers of the United Nations was to save succeeding generations form the scourge of war, conflicts remain a reality in today's world. For 60 years, the United Nations has failed to live up to this expectation. Uganda, therefore, welcomes the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and a Peacebuilding Support Office. We hope that the 31 December 2005 deadline will be met in order to enable those vital bodies help the United Nations effectively address conflict and make peace more sustainable.

In the same vain, we support the establishment of the Democracy Fund, which should be used to support countries' home-grown institutions and not as a mechanism to import foreign brands of democracy.

My delegation is cognizant of the primary responsibility of States to protect their own people. In the event of failure, the international community has a responsibility to protect in order to prevent genocide and ethnic cleansing. However, this responsibility should be clearly defined and its exercise should have the prior authorization of the Security Council.

We believe that the commitment of our leaders to support a stronger relationship between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations will help expand the capacity of the international community to handle the old and new challenges facing the world. Indeed, regional organizations that have a capacity for prevention of armed conflict or peacekeeping should use it to enhance the United Nations in this field.

The existing Commission on Human Rights has been deficient in its performance over the years. We believe that it is time to create an independent institution with an effective and clear mandate to handle human rights. The proposal to create a Human Rights Council is timely. We hope that all the necessary details will be agreed upon so that this Council can be launched.

In conclusion, allow me to restate Uganda's commitment to the ideals and principles of the United Nations. The Organization has served us relatively well over the years. It is capable of serving us even better and achieving the dreams and ideals emanated by the framers of the Charter 60 years ago. This can happen only if we take the bold step of adopting the far-reaching, innovative reforms proposed by the Secretary-General and if we fully implement the outcome document.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan.

Mr. Kasuri (Pakistan): Let me congratulate the President of the current session and former President Jean Ping for the success of the historic sixtieth anniversary summit. We admire the dedication and skill with which President Ping conducted the preparations for the summit. We thank the Secretary-General for his initiative to convene the summit and his numerous constructive ideas to advance development and United Nations reform.

Pakistan supported adoption of the outcome document. It reflects the existing consensus on a range of issues. However, like many others, we are disappointed with the results. We could have achieved more, perhaps, if the agenda were not so extensive, if Security Council reform had not sapped energy from the preparatory process, and if the negotiations on the document had been commenced earlier.

Development was, and remains, of the highest priority for the vast majority of Member States. The summit was to focus on fulfilment of the

internationally agreed development goals. There are welcome recommendations on official development assistance (ODA) targets, debt relief, enhancing and improving aid and addressing the special needs of Africa; but we did not advance very much on trade, investment flows and global governance.

However, we can recover lost ground and lost time on development through a focused and more determined implementation process. The objective must be accorded first priority. Fortunately, agreement exists already on development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The developing countries are adopting national strategies to achieve those goals. Development partners must now demonstrate the political will to fully support the national strategies and to accept greater equity in the international trade and financial systems.

We must quickly put in place an effective mechanism to promote and monitor the implementation of the goals and agreements on development. Adequate resources must be provided for the purpose.

The summit emphasized the role of the Economic and Social Council in promoting policy dialogue, development cooperation, post-conflict development and coordination within the United Nations system. Pakistan believes that the Economic and Social Council should now serve as the central forum for follow-up and implementation of the development commitments made at the summit. In this regard, we would propose that the model developed for tracking tsunami aid — the so-called DAD (Development Assistance Database) system — be replicated to assess the status of implementation of the agreed development goals. Pakistan has also offered to convene a high-level informal meeting of members of the Economic and Social Council and other stakeholders towards the end of this year to review the steps taken to advance the implementation of the development goals and decide on further measures.

The widely recognized interlinkage between peace and development has now been institutionalized with the decision to establish the Peacebuilding Commission. Pakistan is proud that the Peacebuilding Commission evolved from the concept of ad hoc composite committees that we introduced in 2003. As a major troop contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations and, in particular, through our engagement in complex missions, such as in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo [illegible] expertise to [illegible] Pakistan has a wealth of experience and [illegible] Commission [illegible] contribute to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. We shall take part actively in the discussions [illegible] finalize [illegible] tho be held in the General Assembly to commencem[illegible] details and modalities for the [illegible]nt of the Commission's work.

Terrorism [illegible] collective rem[illegible] is a global menace and requires a terrorism. Response. Pakistan has been a major target of war against [illegible] are at the forefront of the international Government terrorism. At home, the Pakistan term measures instituted a number of short- and long-These include[illegible] to eliminate terrorism and extremism. [illegible] detention etc[illegible] banning extremist organizations and material, hat[illegible] extremists, crackdowns against hate registration [illegible]ing the misuse of religious institutions, illiteracy and[illegible]nd reform of the madrassas and fighting [illegible]

The su[illegible] poverty [illegible] comprehensiv[illegible]rrorism has endorsed the elaboration of a set up an ac[illegible] strategy against terrorism. We should strategy. A d[illegible] hoc working group to elaborate this terrorism, w[illegible]comprehensive strategy should oppose groups or [illegible] Wherever and by whomever — individuals, [illegible] it does not[illegible]tes. No strategy can be comprehensive if extremism, [illegible]address the factors that contribute to injustice, for[illegible]including poverty, political and economic self-determinat[illegible]ion occupation and denial of the right to [illegible]

Dialogu[illegible]ation [illegible] and religious[illegible]nc and understanding between civilizations a[illegible] comprehen[illegible]should also be an essential component of several extensive strategy on terrorism. There are that can be [illegible]orthy and mutually reinforcing initiatives national activ[illegible]coalesced to generate international and strategy of "[illegible]m. These include President Musharraf's simultaneous[illegible]enlightened moderation", which seeks to world and [illegible]ly promote internal reform in the Islamic community [illegible]he active support of the international address this[illegible] help resolve political disputes and challenges of [illegible] socio-economic and development [illegible]the Islamic world.

The fai[illegible] [illegible] and non-proliferation to achieve agreement on disarmament the deep differences in the outcome document reflects This is dangerous[illegible]ences that exist among Member States regions of [illegible]ross for peace and stability, especially in community [illegible]lesson. It is time for the international not just within the entire United Nations membership, [illegible]connection [illegible]ry self-selected States, to promote a new [illegible]n disarmament and non-proliferation

through the Conference on Disarmament or a special session of the Disarmament Commission.

The summit also could not achieve full consensus on how to ensure the effective promotion of human rights that, along with "peace and development", is the third pillar of United Nations reform. We should build on the agreement reached to evolve a full consensus. Pakistan will join in creating a new and representative Human Rights Council as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly. Its mandate and methods must promote cooperation rather than confrontation. We must also improve and rationalize the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, the host of special mechanisms that exist on the subject and the participation of civil society in the work of the United Nations on human rights. We feel that this exercise of reform should be entrusted to a working group in Geneva.

We have committed ourselves to strengthening the United Nations and making it more effective, efficient, democratic and accountable. Our pledge to reaffirm the central position of the General Assembly should be given real meaning. The Assembly's role and mandate should be preserved from encroachment, especially by the Security Council. It is the General Assembly that should ensure the follow-up of the summit's decisions.

In its capacity as President of the Economic and Social Council, Pakistan will work closely with member States to implement the proposed enhanced role of the Council with adjustments to the Council's organization, agenda and working methods.

The Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, but it lacks transparency and democracy. It is neither fully representative nor accountable to the general membership. The rationale for its reform is, therefore, clear. The Council should be enlarged by adding 10 additional non-permanent members to reflect the entire spectrum of the United Nations membership. It could allow immediate re-election to enable major countries to seek more frequent membership of the Council, but it should not add to inequality by inducting new permanent members. That would alienate many important countries, divide and weaken the United Nations and further reduce the Council's credibility and legitimacy.

The proposal of Uniting for Consensus is equitable, fair and democratic. It has the flexibility to accommodate the positions and aspirations of all countries and regional and political groupings, including those of Africa. It will increase the representation of the general membership in the Security Council. It will enhance the stature of the General Assembly by making the Council more accountable to the general membership. We are ready to continue efforts — in any open and transparent format, including that of the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group — to reach consensus on Security Council reform.

Pakistan is gratified that the summit reaffirmed the central values and principles of the United Nations and acknowledged that the range of threats we face requires our urgent, collective and more determined response. It also acknowledged that many threats are interdependent. We welcome the renewed emphasis on the peaceful settlement of disputes and on the Charter's strict constraints on the use of force. It is befitting that we are observing the International Day of Peace today.

Pakistan believes that while dealing with new threats, such as terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, the United Nations must continue to accord priority to addressing and resolving the numerous disputes and conflicts that afflict so many regions of our world.

In Africa, there is a new dynamic of regional ownership and international engagement and partnership in addressing conflicts and complex crises. Progress is, however, mixed. Relative improvements in Sierra Leone and Liberia are in contrast with numerous challenges in Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi. We are heartened by the prospects of peace in the Sudan. Somalia, on the other hand, still awaits the international attention and support needed to restore security and consolidate the painful gains in the peace process. Pakistan will continue to contribute to United Nations and international efforts for the restoration of peace and stability in Africa.

The early resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian issue in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and a two-State solution would usher in an era of peace and stability in the Middle East. We have welcomed Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza, and we trust that it will be followed by withdrawal from the

West Bank, leading to the creation of an independent and viable Palestinian State. Pakistan will do whatever it can to promote durable peace in the Middle East. That would help considerably to eliminate the conditions that encourage extremism and terrorism.

Pakistan also hopes for the early restoration of peace and security in Iraq. We should encourage a democratic consensus among its peoples and regions that preserves Iraq's unity and territorial integrity, as well as the strengthening of its national capability to preserve security by combating violence and terrorism.

Afghanistan has completed another milestone with the successful holding of parliamentary elections. The international community must remain fully engaged to help Afghanistan overcome the remaining challenges. Pakistan is committed, bilaterally and multilaterally, to support efforts for peace, security, development and reconstruction in Afghanistan. We wish to see the 3 million Afghan refugees whom we still host return to their homes in safety and honour.

There should be no self-serving questions or quibbling about Pakistan's commitment and contribution to peace and security in Afghanistan, which are in Pakistan's own best interest. Pakistan is actively engaged in halting illegal cross-border movement and containing the threat posed by the Taliban and Al-Qaida, including through the Pakistan-Afghanistan-United States Tripartite Commission. Pakistan's military presence along the border far exceeds the combined strength of the national and international military presence in Afghanistan. We recently proposed partial fencing of the border in limited areas to minimize the chances for illegal movements. We hope that that will be accepted and implemented in the spirit in which it was offered.

Relations between India and Pakistan are improving. There is new hope for peace and cooperation in South Asia. We must also give that hope to the people of Jammu and Kashmir in their legitimate quest for self-determination. In his address to the summit on 14 September, President Musharraf said that Pakistan and India must not remain trapped by hate and history in a cycle of confrontation and conflict. To prevent that from happening, it is essential to find a just solution to the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir, acceptable to Pakistan, India and, above all, the people of Kashmir. On the same day, the President met with the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Manmohan Singh, in New York to further advance the ongoing composite dialogue between our two countries.

Peace in our neighbourhood will also provide a fillip to the efforts being undertaken by Pakistan for rapid and equitable socio-economic development. We share the emphasis placed by the summit on the role of national policies and development strategies in the achievement of sustainable development. The Government has taken a series of actions to transform Pakistan into a modern, dynamic, progressive and democratic Islamic State. Our policies have produced visible results: macroeconomic stability, 8.4 per cent growth in gross domestic product last year, a reduced fiscal deficit and growing export earnings, external remittances and investment. The major focus of our Government now is to accelerate the transfer of economic benefits to the people of Pakistan. We are confident that we will achieve all the targets of the Millennium Development Goals.

Pakistan is also succeeding against terrorism and extremism. It is on the path to sustainable democracy. Our people have been empowered from the grass-roots level up. That includes guaranteed 30 per cent representation of women at all levels. Minorities have been brought into the mainstream. We are determined to sustain those positive trends in our national development. At the same time, we are working to forge close economic partnerships in the region and beyond.

It is in the same spirit of constructive engagement that Pakistan wishes to pursue cooperative multilateralism and to strengthen the United Nations — this unique forum that is indispensable, in our interdependent world, for all States, large or small, powerful or weak.

Pakistan participated actively in, and contributed constructively to, the preparation of the summit and its outcome. We are committed to furthering the reform process in the follow-up to the summit's decisions. We look forward to working closely with all other Member States and would like to assure the Assembly of our full cooperation in this historic endeavour.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Ignacio Walker, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Chile.

Mr. Walker (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am pleased to commend the President, and the other

members of the Bureau on their election. We assure them of our full willingness to cooperate in the tasks facing us.

We arrived at this session of the General Assembly with the same conviction and resolve that we had 60 years ago. We still believe that this is the place where we can collectively promote human rights, development, solidarity and peace. The political agreement reached last week, although it did not meet all our expectations, enables us to embark on the path towards comprehensive and balanced renewal of the United Nations system. We have the necessary mandates to begin renewal during this session. That must be possible, because our interest is the interest of humanity.

We have here an exceptional opportunity to strengthen multilateralism and to build it within the genuine framework of international coexistence. Multilateralism is the very cornerstone of our foreign policy. In the multilateral system, negotiation and consensus are the tools to create international regimes that promote globalization in a legitimate and effective manner. The United Nations is a unique forum in that process, and we must strengthen it in order to achieve those goals. Hence, the urgent need to implement United Nations reform.

We believe that multilateralism can furnish us both with more and better instruments to allow every country, large or small, to participate in the elaboration of rules and in the allocation of the benefits of globalization. We are convinced that globalization is more of an opportunity than a threat. For that reason we must assure the management of globalization, which can be achieved only through institutions that conform to clear, stable and equitable rules of the game within the context of international law. Economic forces do not act in a political vacuum, which is why we need both a new architecture and new working methods in the United Nations system.

It is in that spirit that Chile has taken an active part in various meetings concerned with the revitalization of the United Nations, promoting comprehensive reform in the major areas of development, security, democracy and human rights. I would like to touch briefly on each of those areas.

Protection of human rights is, in our opinion, the central issue of globalization and a continuing preoccupation in the recent history of Chile and Latin America. That history has been written by the citizens and their struggles to restore respect for the dignity and rights of the individual.

Indeed, human rights are a legitimate concern of the international community. Examination of human rights issues by the United Nations does not constitute undue interference. On the contrary, it is the exercise of a shared responsibility, from a standpoint of cooperation and not of confrontation. When States are unable or unwilling to act, the Organization cannot remain indifferent in the face of genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The responsibility to protect is an international moral obligation that we cannot shirk.

For Chile, the decision to establish the Human Rights Council is a significant step towards universal protection of human rights. We hope that before the end of the session, its characteristics, including its status as a permanent organ, will have been defined. The election of its members by a two-thirds majority of the Assembly, as we propose, will strengthen that organ's legitimacy.

Comprehensive reporting by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner would also enhance the credibility of the multilateral human rights system. In order to avoid the politicization and selectivity that are harming United Nations human rights work, a peer review system would promote greater cooperation, with all countries subject to objective evaluations — particularly for those that aspire to seats on the Human Rights Council.

Democratic values are cross-cutting: they apply to the citizens who participate in the life of a community, they underlie the organization of government and public institutions, and they are also the linchpin of international coexistence. Democratic values are a priority on the multilateral agenda and should be reflected in the active commitment of Member States to promote and defend democracy. It was that interest that has motivated Chile's efforts within the Community of Democracies.

While some peoples and regions are part of global society and participate in decision-making and in the distribution of global output, others are marginalized and lack access to those benefits. That situation raises important questions about democratic participation. It is therefore essential, if we wish to consolidate democracy in the world, to move

decisively to eliminate inequality and to abolish exclusion. A better quality of democracy is linked to social integration and poverty relief.

In that connection, the Millennium Development Goals represent a global commitment to fundamental rights, with social underpinnings, that must be achieved in order to effectively consolidate democracy and uproot moral indifference towards the unprotected of the world.

The deepening of democracy must aim at institutional capacity-building in order to meet the demands of society in an effective and transparent manner. We have been working along those lines in the Organization of American States, in particular through the Inter-American Democratic Charter, seeking formulas and instruments to improve democratic governance. Chile believes that that is an area in which there should be close cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

The reaffirmation of democracy as a universal value by heads of State and Government in the outcome document represents concrete progress in the consolidation of a new international regime for the promotion and protection of democracy and the rule of law.

The creation of the United Nations Democracy Fund gives us a new forum for cooperation to help strengthen and consolidate democracy around the world. In April, 108 countries from all continents agreed on the "Santiago commitment: Cooperating for Democracy", which contains guidelines for action.

We have fully endorsed the concept of multidimensional security in order to meet old and new threats. Indeed, the incorporation of the concept of human security at the United Nations is an important contribution to the process of renewal. The definition to be formulated by the General Assembly should incorporate the progress achieved by the Human Security Network, in which Chile has actively participated from the outset.

We were greatly discouraged that no agreement was reached to include the topic of disarmament and non-proliferation in the reform process. That is a topic that must not be dropped from the United Nations agenda. We therefore supported the Norwegian initiative, which succeeded in bridging the gap between opposing positions. Unfortunately, despite receiving the support of nearly 80 countries, the initiative did not find a place in the outcome document. We will continue to work for its adoption.

In addition, we are convinced that terrorism must be tackled through a global and sustained strategy, with the cooperation of all States and international and regional organizations, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law and with full respect for human rights. We must therefore channel our strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations into the political will to conclude an international convention against terrorism before the end of the session.

The decision to establish a Peacebuilding Commission is one of the major successes of the reform agenda, as it will enable the Organization to provide an institutional and integrated response in post-conflict situations. United Nations activities should not cease as soon as a crisis ends but — to build a durable peace — should continue until institutions are rebuilt and peaceful coexistence is restored.

As Latin Americans, and aware of our global responsibilities, we are actively participating in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. We are convinced that that joint commitment, which is strongly regional in nature in Latin America and the Caribbean, has been helpful in enabling Haiti to recover its ability to control its own destiny. This will undoubtedly require the continuing presence of the international community. The elections are an important step, which Haiti should take on schedule. Voting, however, is only the basis for self-determination: we must continue helping to create the prerequisites for a worthier future for the Haitian people. Moreover, Haiti could be the first trial run for the Peacebuilding Commission.

Overcoming poverty, hunger and social inequality is the great challenge facing our peoples today. Economic development with equity is essential in order to achieve a world truly at peace and to guarantee individual rights and stable democracies.

A few days ago, heads of State or Government reviewed the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted in 2000. Our country met over one third of the Goals and hope to achieve them all by 2015.

In order to achieve economic development with equity, each country has a responsibility to be assumed domestically and tasks to be performed internationally. In this connection, it is essential to work to implement the Monterrey Consensus on financing for development, so that in its domestic efforts each country can enjoy the benefits of an international economic environment facilitating poverty relief and permitting sustained development.

We were among the sponsors of the Action against Hunger and Poverty, which seeks to devise innovative financing arrangements to combat this problem within the framework of the international community's endeavours to attain the Millennium Development Goals. We need responses now, and the Action is a definite option recognized in the Summit Outcome.

Chile considers it essential to bolster overall efforts to liberalize international trade for the exports of developing countries and to achieve stable financial flows to their economies. We urge the speedy conclusion of the Doha round, to which we are committed, and a remodelling of the international financial architecture to promote international conditions favourable to the sustained growth of the developing countries and to the elimination of poverty. Development, security and human rights for all are three interdependent concepts that dominate our existence as societies and that must be adequately reflected in a comprehensive reform process. We have embarked on the decisive stage of the road to renewal; we are all responsible for reaching the end.

We must make progress towards consensus on Security Council reform so that that organ can more democratically represent the new realities of the twenty-first century.

It is also essential to renew the Secretariat's managerial capacity to administer effective and responsibly the resources that we all contribute in order to achieve the purposes of the United Nations. Over and above the legitimate differences that are part of the richness of our diversity, we must build universal agreements reflecting common concerns to ensure the dignity of peoples and the right to live in a more secure world.

Let me conclude by saying that this session of the General Assembly is a historic opportunity to promote change. If we do not implement the agreements achieved, hiding behind national interests or narrow cultural visions, we shall be failing to respond to the feelings and expectations of millions of human beings who aspire to understanding among civilizations, a global alliance for development and a reaffirmation of the underlying values of the United Nations. Let us not miss this opportunity. If we do not act collectively today, tomorrow may be too late.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Teodor Baconschi, Secretary of State for Global Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania.

Mr. Baconschi (Romania) (*spoke in French*): I would like to add Romania's voice to those who have warmly congratulated His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson on his election to the important position of President of the General Assembly. We wish him every success and assure him of our full support.

For Romania, the political debates at the sixtieth session of the General Assembly have special significance; during this session, we shall celebrate 50 years of presence and active participation in the common efforts of the United Nations for peace, security and sustainable development, to help populations in distress and to promote human rights. It is uncontestable that the present international situation requires not only that we take a hard, critical look at reality but also that we have the strength to take responsible decisions and strong measures, both politically and at the institutional level, to ensure that the United Nations will be capable of meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century and that it will continue to play an important role in the service of the greater good.

(*spoke in English*)

Romania aligns itself fully with the statement delivered at the 9th plenary meeting by Foreign Secretary Jack Straw of Great Britain on behalf of the European Union. In my address I will, therefore, only complement the key points already made there on the challenges of reform. We can be proud of where the Union stands today on the global scene and of its United Nations record.

By no means is this just another general debate at the start of a new session of the General Assembly. We are called upon to rise to the responsibility enunciated at the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General

Assembly, which preceded these debates. There, heads of State or Government committed all of us, through the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), to continue the efforts to reform our Organization. It is now in our hands to implement our leaders' decisions and make the most of them.

Against this backdrop, I wish to commend Mr. Jean Ping, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, for the outstanding work he has done over the past few months, together with his facilitators, and for the way he conducted the negotiations. It was a difficult process, but I believe that we have a document with which we can be satisfied. Many aspects still need further elaboration, but the General Assembly is ready to work on them under the skilful guidance of the current President, Mr. Jan Eliasson.

The United Nations should continue to accomplish multilayered objectives and to function as a complex, effective organization. That is the spirit of the deliberations conducted by our heads of State or Government and of the decisions they took.

Much thus remains to be done in relation to the mandate and responsibilities of the First Committee. Debates on international security are still dependent on arrangements put in place during the cold war. Unfortunately, almost all multilateral negotiating forums seem complacent in their conservatism. Yet we all agree that, given those premises, it is difficult to advance the political dialogue and to set new priorities.

We need a new dynamic, anchored in a genuine reform process. It has to be tailored to respond effectively to the most ominous threats to international peace and security: terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It has to be truly relevant to our needs and has to produce equal dividends for all in a system based on the concept of collective security.

Success in the area of development calls for broad solidarity in international economic relations. Romania has gradually increased its contribution towards resolving global development issues. And accession to the European Union will make Romania a member of the world's largest donor community. The United Nations must develop and strengthen its capacity to effectively protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, by upholding the concept of a "responsibility to protect", which calls for an international response in cases where a State is unable or unwilling to discharge its primary function of protecting the life, property and fundamental rights of its own citizens.

This imperative is convincingly illustrated by the fact that, over the past 15 years, we have witnessed how a number of internal conflicts, which frequently had started as separatist movements, have evolved to achieve "frozen conflict" status. These conflicts have become breeding grounds for egregious violations of human rights and abuses, targeting the most vulnerable categories, such as women, children and persons belonging to various minorities.

It serves no purpose to debate an ambitious policy agenda unless we have an effective United Nations system adapted to the new realities of a changing world. Years after the end of the cold war, the United Nations is still struggling to make the transition from an organization characterized by ideological differences to one actively responding to pressing operational challenges. Institutional change is an absolute prerequisite for successful policy results.

One of the main problems besetting the Organization could, unfortunately, end up by being perpetuated — that is, increasingly high expectations and demands, without adequate resources and appropriate managerial tools.

At a time when some are calling into question the relevance of our Organization and when we have had to cope recently with a succession of revelations about mismanagement, we, the Secretariat and Member States together, need to act resolutely to ensure the efficiency and credibility of the United Nations by improving administrative performance, establishing viable mechanisms for the responsibility and accountability of the Secretariat, strengthening audit and oversight functions and endowing the Secretary-General with the authority and flexibility needed to manage effectively the mandates entrusted to him by the membership.

For Romania, like other United Nations Members, the Security Council has continued to be the body that monitors international relations with regard to critical issues that pose a threat to regional and global peace. It is highly commendable that the Security Council has assumed the leading role in establishing early warning and resolve as the cornerstones of the United Nations and the

international community's approach to the full range of new threats to international peace and security.

With over 2,000 peacekeepers on duty around the world, Romania is a major contributor and a significant investor in a wide range of United Nations-mandated and United Nations-authorized operations; we therefore have a very high stake in their successful outcome.

Romania's stance has consistently been that protection against security threats means more than just taking a stand at one's own border; we have to go where those challenges originate and approach them with resolute action and sustained investment. This is part of the rationale for Romania's joint endeavours with partners and allies in shouldering stabilization and reconstruction in Iraq and Afghanistan. In both countries, elections are happening, following the tremendous dedication and painstaking efforts of, above all, the people of those countries, and also because of a steadily engaged international community. Romania is carrying her share of this burden all the way through the process.

Since 9/11, the international edifice, as well as our common values of peace and security, have been badly shaken by an unprecedented surge of terrorist activity. Romania was among the first countries to embark on efforts undertaken globally, as well as regionally, to combat this scourge. From that day on, we have constantly been at the forefront of the fight against terrorism, on the ground and through our active participation in the process of shaping successive initiatives in different forums.

Furthermore, Romania has carried out her specific contribution to international counter-terrorism efforts as an elected member of the United Nations Security Council by assuming, inter alia, the chairmanship of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Romania has already advanced to the ratification stage of the 12 relevant international conventions adopted in this area and has transposed important parts of their provisions into its national legislation. I am proud to inform delegates that, on 14 September, my President signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which was adopted by the General Assembly on 13 April 2005. Romania shares the European Union (EU) stand on the urgency of adopting of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

Our crucial aim is to see the day when the international community is able to address each and every security challenge, no matter where, by better pooling existing resources and capabilities.

We were pleased to see recognition given in the Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) to the important contribution that regional organizations have made to peace and security.

The heads of State and Government expressed their support for a stronger relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, under Chapter VIII of the Charter. They resolved to expand this dimension of the new architecture of international peace and security through formalized agreements between the respective secretariats and, as appropriate, the involvement of regional organizations in the work of the Security Council.

Romania's particular experience in South-Eastern Europe and the Black Sea area indicates that, in such cases as conflict management and in handling responses to transnational threats, regional action reinforced by meaningful cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations is decisive.

In the Balkans, the way in which the Kosovo issue will be addressed over the coming months is going to be crucial for the overall prospects for lasting stability, integration and prosperity for the whole region. The United Nations-led policy of standards in Kosovo has improved the situation in the region. The probability of violence and conflict is lower now than in the past, and we can start looking more confidently towards the future. However, the job is not yet done. Serbs and other ethnic communities in Kosovo still fear for their security and cannot live normal lives. There are also too many who are still waiting to return to their homes. Therefore, the comprehensive implementation of standards must continue, with thorough consideration given to securing and protecting normal relations between ethnic communities, as well as to the rights and freedoms of all people from Kosovo. No one will be able to refer realistically to stability and a political settlement in the region, as called for in United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), until such a foundation is achieved.

East of Romania, in the wider Black Sea area, development is hampered by a lack of overall security and stability. I am referring particularly to the situations of protracted conflict in the region, frozen in a state of uncertainty and disregard for international law and scrutiny. Besides their negative impact on development and political normalcy, these conflict areas also spread modern maladies in the neighbourhood, such as organized crime, illegal arms and drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings, and, not least, terrorism. The States of the region have to rise to meet these challenges together. They will not be able to do so without close cooperation. They need strong partners, strategic vision and a coherent, more comprehensive approach. It is clear that we have to find something better and more sustainable than trying to put these conflicts in the freezer for decades or years. In order to ensure the benefits of stability in the wider Black Sea area for all involved, the best way is to work towards making the logic of cooperation prevail.

In November, Romania will take up the chairmanship of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation pact. In this capacity, Romania will try to encourage all players in the region to think strategically in the common interest and overcome the burden of these protracted conflicts so as to maximize the region's economic and social potential. Also, given the world's interdependence, the States of the region need a United Nations that has closer links to regional structures and that can enhance, in turn, the effectiveness of joint action.

However we characterize the 2005 World Summit Outcome — as a blueprint or a road map — it is beyond a doubt that United Nations reform is still a work in progress. As far as Romania is concerned, we stand ready to join the presidency and all Member countries in endeavours to prepare the United Nations to meet the heavy demands placed on multilateral cooperation in the twenty-first century.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.